

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2005** at **2:30 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

A G E N D A

PRAYER

The Reverend Ally Barrett, Curate of St Mary the Virgin Church, Godmanchester will open the meeting with prayer.

APOLOGIES

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 2)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2005.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda item. Please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

3. CABINET PROCEDURE RULES - DELEGATION BY THE LEADER
(Pages 3 - 10)

To note information presented by the Leader about executive functions for the ensuing year.

4. GROWING SUCCESS - A CORPORATE PLAN (Pages 11 - 14)

To recommend the Council to adopt an updated corporate plan - "Growing Success". A report by the Chief Officers Management Team is enclosed.

5. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005/06 (Pages 15 - 26)

The portfolio holder for Housing and Public Health, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds to present the Food Safety Plan to the Council for adoption. A report by the Head of Environmental Health Services is enclosed.

6. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEE

The Chairmen of the Cabinet, Panels and Committees to present the following Reports –

- (a) Cabinet (Pages 27 - 46)
- (b) Standards Committee (Pages 47 - 48)
- (c) Development Control Panel (Pages 49 - 100)
- (d) Employment Panel (Pages 101 - 102)
- (e) Licensing and Protection Panel (Pages 103 - 106)
- (f) Licensing Committee (Pages 107 - 108)
- (g) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) (Pages 109 - 114)
- (h) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) (Pages 115 - 118)

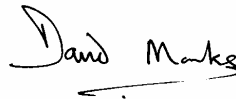
7. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Section 8.3) of the Council' Constitution to receive oral questions from Members of the Council.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive to report on absences of Members from meetings.

Dated this 21st day of June 2005



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, a partner, relatives or close friends;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard*

the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Please contact Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@huntsdc.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Council.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk (under Councils and Democracy).

If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.

আপনি যদি এই লিখিত তথ্যের (ডকুমেন্ট) একটি অনুবাদ, একটি বড় অক্ষরে লেখা সংস্করণ অথবা একটি শ্রবণ যোগ্য (অডিও) সংস্করণ চান, তবে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সঙ্গে ০১৪৮০ ৩৮৮০০৭ নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন এবং আমরা আপনার প্রয়োজন মেটাতে চেষ্টা করব।

這份文件，若你想得到一份譯文版、一份字體大的版本或錄音版，請電 01480 388007 與我們聯絡，我們將會盡力來迎合閣下的需要。

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا ترجمہ بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر درکار ہو تو براہ مہربانی ہم سے 01480 388007 پر رابطہ کریں، ہم آپ کی ضروریات پوری کرنے کیلئے اپنی طرف سے مکمل کوشش کریں گے

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the special meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 25 May 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor J A P Eddy - Chairman

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker,
Mrs M Banjeree, I C Bates, J T Bell,
Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler,
Mrs J Chandler, K J Churchill, S J Criswell,
J W Davies, D B Dew, P J Downes, J D Fell,
N J Finnie, J E Garner, Mrs C A Godley, J A Gray,
N J Guyatt, A Hansard, D Harty, D P Holley,
C R Hyams, P G Mitchell, M F Newman,
J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, L M Simpson,
A B Stenner, J Taylor, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin,
Mrs S J Vanbergen, J S Watt and Ms M Wheeler.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors W T Clough, Mrs D E Collins, J J Dutton, D A Giles, Mrs K P Gregory, Mrs P J Longford, I R Muir, R Powell, Mrs D C Reynolds, K Reynolds, T V Rogers, C J Stephens, P A Swales and I P Taylor.

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18th May 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor J A P Eddy declared a personal interest in Policy Area 5 of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report by virtue of his membership of the Anglia Central Regional Flood Committee.

19. CORE POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to allow consideration of a summary of the draft Final Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment as an essential adjunct to the Core Strategy Development Plan Document in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972).

By reference to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Councillor N J Guyatt invited the Council to consider the contents of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report (Appendix 1) prior to public consultation. Members' attention also was drawn to supplementary documents which had been circulated with the agenda and also are appended in the Minute Book as follows -

- ◆ Background Paper on Settlement Hierarchy (Appendix 2);

- ◆ Results of Initial Consultation on Options (Appendix 3);
- ◆ Final Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment – May 2005; and
- ◆ Index to Appendix 1 – Preferred Option Report.

The Council were reminded of the process and anticipated timescale for public consultation on the Preferred Options, the submission of the Draft Core Strategy to the Secretary of State, the independent examination of the proposals and the receipt of the Inspector's Report leading to final adoption of the Local Development Framework.

In his introduction, Councillor Guyatt indicated that much of the housing and business development required in the District would be accommodated in and around Huntingdon and St Neots with development on a lesser scale in the other market towns of St Ives and Ramsey. Mention was made of the intention to improve the habitats, landscape quality and recreation opportunities of several areas and to improve the green corridor running through the centre of St Neots to Little Paxton to maintain a buffer between the town and Little Paxton village. He added that similar steps should be taken to maintain the separation between Hampton and communities in the neighbouring parts of Huntingdonshire such as Yaxley, Farcet and Stilton. Together with the proposals map, Councillor Guyatt advised the Council that the Core Strategy Document would be the tool by which future decisions of the Development Control Panel would be guided.

The Council proceeded to examine the key principles and policy areas contained within the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report and the Executive Councillor responded to questions from Members as they arose.

During discussion, the Leader, Councillor D P Holley, emphasised that Members also had the opportunity to submit their views during the consultation period and that whilst the principles to be established would, in time, be applied by the Development Control Panel they remained the policies of the Council as a whole.

Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Guyatt, duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that the content of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report be approved as a basis for public consultation.

20. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Director of Central Services reported that there were no absences of Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 8 pm.

Chairman

Cabinet Procedure Rules – Delegation by the Leader

Report by the Head of Administration

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Cabinet Procedure Rules in the Council’s Constitution set out arrangements for the operation and conduct of the Cabinet and its meetings. The Rules provide for the Leader to present to the Annual Meeting of the Council or within 21 days thereafter to the Chief Executive a written record containing information about executive functions in relation to the following year.
- 1.2 As these details were not finalised in time to present to the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Chief Executive is required to report the information to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the written record must contain the following information:-
- (i) the collation of relevant executive functions into related groups to be known as “portfolios”;
 - (ii) the names and wards of the Members of the Cabinet appointed by the Leader to be responsible for individual portfolios;
 - (iii) the extent of any authority delegated by the Leader to a Member of the Cabinet individually (including himself), including details of the limitation (if any) on their authority;
 - (iv) the nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions proposed to any other authority or under any joint arrangements and the names of those Cabinet Members and/or other Members appointed to any joint committee under Article 11 of the Constitution for the coming year; and
 - (v) the nature and extent of any delegation to officers with details of any limitation (if any) on that delegation, and the title of the officer to whom the delegation is made.

3. DELEGATION BY THE LEADER

- 3.1 In accordance with the above requirements, the Leader has given notice of the following decisions:-

**Portfolio for Environment and Transport -
Cllr Mrs P J Longford
(St Neots Priory Park Ward)**

Architectural/design work
Community safety
Emergency planning/CCTV
Environmental improvements
Land drainage
Project/contractual management
Residual highway responsibilities/
Public utilities.
Street naming and
property numbering
Transportation and travel plan
Waste stream policy/
sustainability

**Portfolio for Finance –
Cllr T V Rogers
(Earith Ward)**

Benefits assessments/payments
Cashiering
Debt recovery
Local taxation
NDR
Revenue Collection

Accountancy/payments/payroll
Audit
Budget
External funding
Investments
Procurement
Risk management

**Portfolio for Housing and Public Health –
Cllrs Mrs D C Reynolds
(St Ives East Ward)**

Abandoned vehicles
Air quality/noise/pollution
Animal welfare/pest control
Caravan sites
Commercial:
health and safety promotion/
food safety/
infectious diseases
Home energy conservation
Private sector housing

Home Improvement Agency
Homelessness
Housing grants
including disabled facilities grants
Housing strategies/policies
Maintenance of housing register/
nominations
Private sector housing
Relations with housing providers/
Associations

**Portfolio for Leisure –
Cllr Mrs J Chandler**
(Fenstanton Ward)

Community initiatives/
Development/grants, etc
Countryside Services
Leisure Centres/development
Parks/open spaces
The Arts
Tourism

**Portfolio for Operations and
Information Technology –
Cllr L M Simpson**
(Huntingdon East Ward)

Car parks/public conveniences
Grounds maintenance/
Grass cutting
Recycling
Streetscene/cleansing
Vehicle fleet management
Waste/refuse collection

Business analysis/improvement
Customer First
Freedom of Information
Geographic Information Systems
IT network and systems
Website

**Portfolio for Planning
Strategy – Cllr N J Guyatt**
(Elton and Folksworth Ward)

Building control/
Dangerous structures/
Disabled access
Conservation/listed buildings
Development control/
Planning applications
Development plans/policies
Planning briefs/studies
Planning enforcement
Trees and footpaths

**Portfolio for Resources and
Policy – Cllr A Hansard**
(St Neots – Eynesbury Ward)

Criminal records checks
Health and Safety
Personnel management/advice/
contractual arrangements
Recruitment/retention
Staff Restaurant
Training/development

Communications/PR
Community strategy/
Huntingdonshire Strategic
Partnership
Comprehensive performance
Assessment
Corporate policy
("Growing Success")

Diversity and equalities
Economic development
Opinion surveys
Town centre management

Contracts
Conveyancing
Data Protection/Regulation of
Investigatory Powers
Estates/property management/
Acquisition/sales
Legal Advice
Prosecutions and litigation
Representation at Planning and
Other Inquiries

Democratic Services
Elections/electoral registration
Land Charges
Member support
Printing/reprographics

- 3.2 The Leader has retained responsibility for issues associated with the Council's headquarters and other accommodation and for the strategic overview of personnel.

Joint Arrangements

- 3.3 The Cabinet has delegated executive functions and joint arrangements to the Leisure Centre Management Committees at St Ivo, Huntingdon, St Neots, Ramsey and Sawtry. These Management Committees consider matters relating to the management of each Centre within a budget approved by the constituent authorities and as defined in their relevant Management Agreements signed by those authorities.
- 3.4 Similarly, the Cabinet has delegated executive functions under joint arrangements to the Huntingdonshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee which exercises within the context and budget delegated to it by the constituent authorities the powers of each authority on a variety of matters relating to traffic management, design and consultation for improvement schemes, the cycleways programme and local air quality strategies.
- 3.5 The membership of each Management Committee and the Area Joint Committee is set out in the Appendix to this report.

Delegation to Officers

- 3.6 Delegations to Members or Officers authorised in the previous Municipal Year 2004/5 have been incorporated in the review of the Constitution which was undertaken in the Spring and approved at the

meeting of the Council held on 13th April 2005. These are listed in the current constitution.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 **The Council is requested to note the information presented by the Leader on executive functions for the ensuing Municipal Year.**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

District Council's Constitution

**Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager
☎ (01480) 388007**

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JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

Huntingdon Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors Mrs J Chandler, J J Dutton, J D Fell, C R Hyams Mrs S A Menczer and L M Simpson.

St Neots Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, Mrs J Chandler, A Hansard, Mrs P J Longford and I P Taylor.

St Ivo Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors J D Ablewhite, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs J Chandler, S J Criswell and C J Stephens.

Ramsey Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors E R Butler, Mrs J Chandler, I R Muir, R Powell, and P A Swales.

Sawtry Leisure Centre Management Committee

Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs J Chandler, J E Garner, P G Mitchell and J S Watt.

Huntingdonshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee

Councillors M G Baker, N J Guyatt, Mrs P J Longford, M F Newman, K Reynolds and T D Sanderson.

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Growing Success: A Corporate Plan

Report by the Chief Officers Management Team

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2004 the Council adopted a new corporate plan – “Growing Success”. The Plan has been reviewed by Members of both the Overview & Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet in relation to the continuing development of the Council’s comprehensive performance management framework and prioritisation of objectives; performance in the achievement of a range of outcomes; and target setting for the forthcoming year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2004 the Council adopted a new corporate plan, which built on considerable work by both the Overview & Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet around the Council’s priorities and the implementation of a comprehensive performance management framework.

- 2.2 The plan is a key part of the Council’s policy framework which –

- ◆ supports the Community Strategy and through this, wider regional and national objectives;
- ◆ provides the context within which the comprehensive performance management framework will operate;
- ◆ helps in our prioritisation and sets direction for other processes, such as the medium term plan and service reviews; and
- ◆ integrates improvement planning with the Council’s overall business planning.

- 2.3 The aims and outcomes of the plan play a significant role in the service planning process. They will continue to be used to develop and revise corporate strategies and service plans and to be reflected in the key performance areas of employees.

- 2.4 In previous years the Council has been required also to publish a Best Value Performance Plan, which replicated much of the information in “Growing Success”. As an excellent authority, the Council is in a position to take advantage of “freedoms and flexibilities” concerning the publication of Best Value Performance Plans. Information that is still required to be published, including the outturn data and future targets for the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), has been incorporated into the corporate plan.

- 2.5 Following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Council adopted an improvement plan, which also has been incorporated into

Growing Success. This high-level improvement plan identifies areas that have been earmarked for development and some of the key activities that will be required to secure improvement. Each topic is supported by a specific action or project plan.

- 2.6 The delivery of the improvement plan is the subject of a study by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources), which has established a Member Sub-Group for this purpose. The Sub-Group have met with the Council's "Relationship Manager" appointed by the Audit Commission who has confirmed that the improvement plan identifies all the development areas earmarked as part of the CPA process, together with other issues to address the likely requirements of future assessments. The Sub-Group are examining the individual action plans that support the overall improvement plan. Progress in the achievement of the improvement plan will be monitored through the Council's comprehensive performance management framework.
- 2.7 During the last year work has continued to develop the Council's corporate performance management framework, particularly in the area of prioritisation. The Council's six key priorities have been assessed and categorised as high, medium and low in accordance with perceived current needs. It is envisaged that the categorisations will change over time in the light of the achievements made against the priorities and in relation to the needs of the area generally. The impact of Council services on these priorities has also been assessed and ranked similarly as high, medium or low. Combined with the classification of the six priorities, the two exercises provide an important aid to service planning, service review and the allocation of resources. A similar exercise has been conducted in relation to the outcomes identified in both the process and learn and grow perspectives of the corporate plan.
- 2.8 The "scorecard" appended to the plan provides the results of performance (where available) and is shown against the targets set for the last year. Many of the performance measures have been collected from an annual survey – a copy of which is available on request from the Head of Policy. As Members will be aware, the introduction of the framework and process with the attendant need to identify targets and set measures for their attainment has been a significant and innovatory piece of work for the Council. In some cases baseline information was incomplete or simply unavailable and revised targets have, therefore, been suggested where performance data or additional information since has become available. In some areas data is still not yet available, either because it is in the course of collection – such as from a staff survey, which is being commissioned – or because work is still underway to develop the systems and criteria against which performance will be measured.
- 2.9 The Overview & Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet now will receive quarterly reports on performance against targets in the plan and other indicators. Monitoring will focus on interim or "leading" measures, which are intended to provide assurance that performance at the end

of the year will meet the targets set or highlight the need for remedial action in the meantime.

2.10 The Overview & Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet have considered the contents of Growing Success, reviewed performance data and the revised targets for 2005/06, and in so doing have —

- ◆ sought clarification on aspects of performance for the past year;
- ◆ suggested that the priorities referred to in the Plan should be used to support future decision-making, particularly when allocating resources; and
- ◆ commented on the categorisation of services in terms of their perceived impact on the achievement of the Council's priorities.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 **Against the background of the deliberations by the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panels and the development and monitoring framework proposed in the document, the Council is requested to —**

- ◆ **adopt the updated corporate plan – “Growing Success”.**

Contact Officer: Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy
☎ (01480) 388005

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Food Safety Service Plan 2005/06

Report by the Head of Environmental Health Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member endorsement for the Food Safety Service Plan for 2005/06. It is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement that a Food Safety Service Plan be prepared in accordance with a format provided by the FSA. Under the Council's constitution this is part of the policy framework that has to be formally approved by the Council.
- 1.2 This is the fifth annual report which details the work that the service has planned for 2005/06, the staffing and financial resources required, the constraints that may prevent some of the tasks from being fulfilled and the priority of the tasks. It also includes a review of the previous year's performance and identifies where the Authority was at significant variance from the service plan and the reasons for that variance. The review is set out in Section 6 of the service plan on pages 33 to 41.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is a Food Authority and as such it is responsible for enforcing specific food safety legislation, this work is carried out by the Environmental Health Services Division. The service is linked to the priority outcome of a healthy population.
- 2.2 The aim of the Service Plan is to -
- ◆ provide information about the Food Safety Service;
 - ◆ identify the means by which the service will be provided;
 - ◆ identify the means by which the service will meet any relevant performance targets or performance standards;
 - ◆ enable performance to be reviewed by examining any variances from the Service Plan; and
 - ◆ demonstrate a balanced enforcement approach.
- 2.3 The FSA sees this Service Plan as a mechanism for local authorities to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally as well as -
- ◆ focussing debate on key delivery issues;
 - ◆ providing an essential link with financial planning;
 - ◆ setting objectives for the future and identifying major issues that cross service boundaries; and

- ◆ providing a means of managing performances and making performance comparisons.

3. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN 2004/05

- 3.1 The food section was fully staffed for seven months of the financial year and carried 2 full-time vacancies at various stages during the other five months. In addition to that a new Commercial Services Manager was appointed to the post in October to cover the secondment of the post-holder. The team still achieved 100% of all required inspections. Most of the pro-active work planned for the year was also completed.
- 3.2 There were two successful prosecutions this year for offences under the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995. These resulted from dirty and unhygienic conditions being found in two food premises. We achieved substantial fines and significant media coverage. In addition the proprietors of two food business were formally cautioned, for offences under the Food Safety Act 1990. Officer time and legal costs involved in bringing cases to court are significant.
- 3.3 In October last year the Foods Standards Agency consolidated the previous 20 separate Codes of Practice into one Code. Food authorities are required to have regard to this revised Code when discharging their duties.
- 3.4 There was a considerable amount of work required to implement the new provisions including revising all of the Standard Operating Procedures, amending the Enforcement Policy, changing the way data is recorded on the database and re-designing the various inspection forms. I am pleased to report that all of this work was completed without additional resource requirements.
- 3.5 There were no major food-borne illness outbreaks. All individual cases of notifiable food-borne illness were investigated.

4. SERVICE PLAN FOR 2005/06

- 4.1 The format of this document remains essentially unchanged from that of the previous year. (An executive summary is attached at Appendix A.) The resources provided by the Council are currently sufficient to enable this Authority to meet the requirements that the FSA requires of Food Authorities. In the event of difficulties arising that would prevent all the targets being met, priority would be given to the inspection of food premises. It is also possible that the FSA may redirect resources to meet the need of a major food safety concern.
- 4.2 The new FSA Code introduced a number of changes to the way food law may be enforced. In particular the Code allows an Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) to be adopted in the service plan. The AES may include a change from inspecting low risk premises on a 5-year cycle to not inspecting them. It is open to us to decide how we would continue to monitor these premises without inspecting them.

Even if we are not inspecting, under the Code, these premises must be subject to some type of enforcement activity every 3 years. We are proposing in this year's service plan to continue to inspect, on a 3-yearly cycle, but also to pilot an AES. The AES could involve postal questionnaires being sent out to obtain the information necessary to re-assess risk and maintain the database. If this pilot is successful, we may be able to adopt this strategy for next year. The outcome of the pilot study will be reported to Members with the introduction of the 2006/07 service plan.

- 4.3 Amendments have been made to the 2004/05 service plan, to create the 2005/06 service plan. These have included updating performance data and introducing new elements to the education programme. (See Appendix B.)

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Last year the team successfully inspected all premises on their programme and delivered most of the initiatives outlined in the 2004/05 development plan. This year's plan includes a pilot scheme for any alternative enforcement strategy which may allow us to inspect fewer premises in future. The plan also includes new elements to the education programme.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 **Members are requested to endorse the Food Safety Service Plan.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Food Safety Service Plan 2005/06
FSA Framework Agreement
FSA Code of Practice

Contact Officers: Susan Lammin, Head of Environmental Health Services
☎ 01480 388280/
Andy Agass, Commercial Services Manager
☎ 01480 388290

A full copy of the Food Safety Service Plan 2005/06 is available in the Members' Room. If you wish to have an individual copy, please contact the Environmental Health Admin Section on 01480 388302.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2005/6

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Food Safety Service is to work with businesses and consumers to endeavour to ensure that food intended for sale for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or purchased within Huntingdonshire is without risk to public health or the safety of the consumer

The service is linked to the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success' and the priority outcome of a healthy population.

The following service outcomes are identified within the performance management system and will be measured to determine the effectiveness of the listed activities and actions -

- ◆ A high level of food safety at registered premises
- ◆ Compliance with statutory requirements for inspection of food premises
- ◆ Effective containment of outbreaks of food-borne illness
- ◆ A high level of food safety in the home

The service will seek to achieve this through a number of key actions that are identified within this service plan

Changes in resources from 2004/05 to 2005/06

STAFF	2004/05	2005/06
Environmental Health Officers	2.50	2.50
Environmental Health Protection Officers	2.20	2.05
Commercial Services Manager	0.50	0.50
	5.20	5.05
Admin Support Staff	1.55	1.75
Total	6.75	6.80

FINANCIAL	2004/05	2005/06
Staff Costs	£295,910	£342,800
Admin Support Costs	£41,460	£47,270
Central Support Costs	£32,740	£33,260
Direct costs (specialist equipment legal fees and sampling)	£20,930	£29,900
Contingency MTP bid	£50,200	
Total	<u>£441,240</u>	<u>£453,230</u>
Income	<u>-£4,000</u>	<u>-£3,060</u>
NET EXPENDITURE	£437,240	£450,170

ACTIONS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

All calculations assume 1 x FTE = 1290 hours per year (215 working days x 6 productive hours per working day). All estimates include revisit activity. Time does not include administrative support.

Proactive Tasks	Level of activity		Time	FTE
	Actual 2004/05	Estimated 2005/06	Estimated 2005/06	Estimated 2005/06
Planned Food Hygiene inspections	692	641	3070	2.38
Revisits	198	180		
Spot Checks	29	35		
Inspection of new, mobile and temporary premises		100		
Butchers licences	25	25		
Game dealers licences	15	15		
EC approved manufacturing plants				
Food safety promotion	Provision of food hygiene training courses, (for English and non-English speaking food handlers) development of newsletters, leaflets, website. Promoting food safety week, safety zone etc (this resource is in addition to those identified in advice to businesses).		640	0.50
Liaison with other organisations	Maintenance and development of existing links and initiatives both internal and external.		250	0.18

Reactive Tasks	Level of activity		Time	FTE
	Actual 2004/05	Estimated 2005/06	Estimated 2005/06	Estimated 2005/06
Food related complaints– estimate complaints re premises and food	200	210	590	0.46
Food inspection and sampling- Estimate food, water and environmental samples to be taken	230	230	100	0.08
Infectious disease control- estimate notifications of food poisoning	330	250	150	0.12
Food Safety Incidents- estimate receipt >75 Food Alerts from the FSA	50	75	75	0.06
Advice to business enquiries	Advice given at the time of each inspection plus an estimated further 200 enquiries from the public and businesses on food safety matters, including Home Authority Principle.		500	0.39
Staff development and training	Internal and external training courses, research and development of special projects and initiatives		500	0.39

Reactive Tasks	Level of activity	Time	FTE
Service management	Overall supervision and management of service, policy and procedural development	640	0.49
Total		6515	5.05

This represents a small decrease in staffing of 0.15 FTE on the previous year because some staff time has been re-allocated to the Health and Safety service.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005/06

- ◆ Implement an alternative enforcement strategy following the introduction of the new Food Standards Agency Code of Practice in October 2004.
- ◆ Develop further the out-of-hours inspection regime of food businesses and increase the number of inspections carried out.
- ◆ Carry out further research into the development of a local food hygiene award scheme for caterers and other food businesses.
- ◆ Develop a standard operating procedure for the drafting of letters sent to food businesses following primary and secondary inspections.
- ◆ Develop a standard operating procedure for product specific premises
- ◆ Following the launch of the Business Consultation Group for Service users, establish a mechanism where links can be forged between local businesses and the Commercial Services Team.
- ◆ Participate in the LACORS seasonal survey for the sampling of raw poultry.
- ◆ Develop a “what’s new” link on the H.D.C. website where the public can be kept informed of new legislation and local initiatives.
- ◆ Produce a revised food inspection report form that reflects the changes in the new Food Standards Agency Code of Practice.
- ◆ Review all of the food safety information leaflets and standardise the format.
- ◆ To continuously upgrade the Flare database to improve quality and detailed information available to managers, officers and the FSA.
- ◆ Introduce a mechanism to work in partnership with the Huntingdonshire PCT to devise food hygiene awareness training to schools, luncheon clubs and vulnerable groups
- ◆ Develop a procedure for dealing with licence applications received from food businesses following the introduction of the new Licensing Act 200

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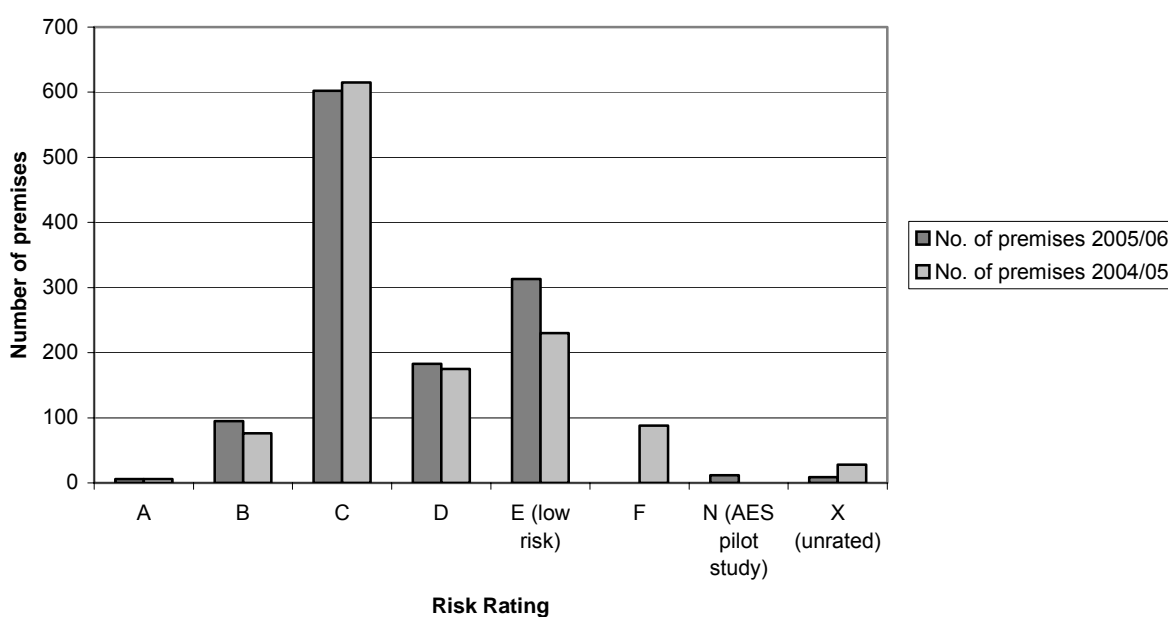
CHANGES TO THE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMME 2005/2006

Food Hygiene Inspections

As of 1 April 2005 a total of 1227 food premises are subject to programmed food hygiene inspections. The breakdown of premises by types as identified within the Food Standards Agency monitoring report form is as follows:

Food Producers (A)	8
Slaughterhouses (B)	1
Food Manufactures/processors (C)	6
Food Packer (D)	4
Importer/Exporter (E)	0
Food Distribution/Transporter (F)	34
Food Retailer (G)	260
Food Caterer (H)	866
Food Manufacturer selling retail (J)	48

The profile of risk categories, as defined by the revised FSA Code of Practice issued under the Food Safety Act 1990, is shown below. Nine new premises are currently waiting to be rated (annotated as X) and will receive an inspection within two months of their opening date. Twelve premises are shown on the graph as Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) pilot study. Previously these premises were categorised as having no inspectable risk. (See paragraph 4.2 of report.)



Education Programme

- ◆ It is planned to increase the number of programmed Foundation Food Hygiene courses from 15 to 17. In 2004/05 we ran 15 courses and predicated demand this year has led to the increased provision
- ◆ It is planned to review all food safety information and leaflets available through the service
- ◆ It is planned to work in partnership with Huntingdon PCT to devise food hygiene training for schools, luncheon clubs and vulnerable groups

For comparison, the table below shows the enforcement activity carried out in previous years.

	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Estimated
Food inspections carried out	651	692	641
- high risk	481	525	485
- low risk	170	167	156
Butchers licence	26	25	25
Game dealers licence	15	15	15
Spot check visits	64	29	35
Revisits	199	198	220

	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual
Total number of inspections and visits	1120	1158
Number of letters/inspection reports	989	1279
Improvement notices	34	16
Formal cautions	0	2
Food complaints	119	123
Food Premises	83	87
Prosecutions	3	2
Food samples (total)	134	136
Unsatisfactory food samples	5	10
Export certificates issued	65	47
Infectious diseases	328	247

	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual
Food alerts (hazard warnings)	65	74
Customer satisfaction results		
- Food inspections	99.4%	97%
- Food complaints	85.3%	94%
- Infectious Diseases	93.0%	100%

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Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 7th and 28th April,
19th May and 9th June 2005

Matters for Decision

1. **PROPOSED UPGRADE OF ELLINGTON/FEN DITTON – HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION**

Further to the meeting of the Council held on the 13th April 2005, the Cabinet has discussed proposals published by the Highways Agency to improve the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton (a copy of the report of the Director of Operational Services is appended).

Having authorised the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, to agree a statement of principles with other Cambridgeshire local authorities as a joint submission to the Highways Agency based on the principles set out in the attached report, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the comments listed in the report of the Director of Operational Services form the basis of the Council's formal response to the Highways Agency consultation on the upgrade of the A14.

Since the meeting of the Cabinet the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) have met to discuss the proposals and their recommendations are referred to in Item No 1 of the Report of their meeting held on 14th June 2005.

Matters for Information

2. **LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the background to and terms of a second Local Public Service Agreement in Cambridgeshire. Having noted details of the District Council's involvement and discussed the allocation of the funding involved, the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader, has been authorised to enter into a partnership agreement.

3. ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

The Cabinet has been informed of a new requirement for the Council to produce an Annual Efficiency Statement. Having noted the scope for savings to be made and the timetable for its submission, the Director of Commerce and Technology, after consultation with the Leader and the Chief Executive, has been authorised to submit the Annual Efficiency Statement to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

**4. PLANNING FOR MIXED COMMUNITIES –
CONSULTATION PAPER ON A PROPOSED CHANGE TO PPG3:
HOUSING**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the contents of a consultation paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister entitled “Planning for Mixed Communities”. In approving a suggested response, the Cabinet has decided that reference should be made to the Council’s concern that without the necessary Local Development Framework, it would be impossible to achieve the suggested sanction of refusing planning permission should a development proposal not adequately meet the objective of ensuring a mixed community.

5. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE’S INTERIM PLAN

The Cabinet has endorsed the content of the Children and Young People’s Interim Plan which has been produced by the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership for 2005-06. The purpose of the Plan is to help organisations demonstrate their contribution to the overall vision for children and young people in Cambridgeshire and make connections more effectively with the work of other agencies.

Having been informed that Government guidance was expected on the preparation of statutory plans from 1st April 2006, the Cabinet has noted that the Partnership had produced the interim plan to provide direction to those agencies involved in the short-term.

**6. MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS:
REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

The Cabinet has approved a revised Communications and Consultation Strategy for the Council, together with an associated action plan. The revised strategy is intended to provide a framework for the Council’s corporate communications on a structured and consistent basis, whilst the action plan sets out some of the key activities that will help achieve the outcomes in the strategy and contribute to the Council’s wider priorities.

The performance targets and measures will be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources).

**7. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:
WEST OF STUKELEY ROAD, HUNTINGDON**

The Cabinet has approved a draft Urban Design Framework for land to the west of Stukeley Road in Huntingdon for public consultation. The framework is designed to establish some clear guiding principles for development to ensure that the quality of Stukeley Road is significantly improved

8. CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT, 2004 – FUNDING ISSUES

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the service requirements and funding implications required to facilitate the implementation of duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.

In so doing, the Cabinet has endorsed in principle a proposal to expand the County Council's Civil Protection Unit and establish a joint agency team to take forward work on the Community Risk Register, and to contribute a sum of £23,000 per annum to support these arrangements in the period 2005/06 to 2007/08. The financial contributions will be reviewed in October 2006, and these will be funded by a supplementary capital estimate of £23,000 in 2005/06 and an unavoidable MTP bid of the same amount in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

**9. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR
PRIMARY CARE SERVICES IN LITTLE PAXTON**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the details of a consultation being undertaken by Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust on the future provision of primary care services to the residents of Little Paxton.

Having considered the options outlined in the consultation paper and concluded that the loss of primary care services would be detrimental to local residents, the Cabinet has requested that the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust be informed of the Council's deep concern with regard to any suggestion that primary care services be withdrawn from Little Paxton and their support for the establishment of a branch surgery in the village, together with an in-house pharmacy.

**10. MONITORING OF THE REVENUE BUDGET AND
CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Consideration has been given by the Cabinet to reports monitoring the revenue budget and capital programme expenditure in 2004/05. Particular attention was given to variations to the approved programme and the estimated capital and revenue implications. In so doing, the Cabinet has approved supplementary capital estimates of £214,000 for revenue funded staff capital schemes and £800,000 towards the Heart of Oxmoor bid and their financing from capital receipts.

11. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN OFF

The Cabinet has been advised of those debts which have been written off as irrecoverable during the period January – March 2005.

A summary of the list is available on request from the Democratic Services Section.

12. ADVICE ON HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENTS

The Cabinet has agreed to appoint the consultants, CB Richard Ellis, to advise the Council on proposals for the future development of Huntingdon town centre.

13. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Executive responsibilities for the Municipal Year 2005/06 have been allocated by the Leader as follows -

- ◆ Leisure – Councillor Mrs J Chandler
- ◆ Planning Strategy – Councillor N J Guyatt
- ◆ Resources and Policy – Councillor A Hansard
- ◆ Environment and Transport – Councillor Mrs P J Longford
- ◆ Housing and Public Health – Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds
- ◆ Finance – Councillor T V Rogers; and
- ◆ Operations and Information Technology – Councillor L M Simpson.

Responsibility for issues associated with the Council's Headquarters and Other Accommodation and the strategic overview of personnel has been reserved to the Leader. Those Members appointed to hold executive responsibility for Resources and Policy, Planning Strategy and the Leader have been appointed ex-officio Members of the Licensing Committee/Licensing and Protection, Development Control and Employment Panels respectively.

14. CORE POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet has had the opportunity to consider, in advance of the special Council meeting, the suggested preferred options for inclusion in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy is the first part of the Local Development framework to be provided by the Council and will set out a vision for the District and policies for guiding the development and use of land. The findings of the Draft Final Sustainability Appraisals on Strategic Environmental Assets also were presented to Members. These had been produced by consultants and compared the suggested preferred options against social, economic and environmental criteria to ensure the approaches which had been recommended would be more sustainable than any alternatives identified. Having also been advised of the timescale and procedure for public consultation and

consideration of the document by the Council prior to submission to the Secretary of State, the Cabinet recommended the Special Meeting to approve the contents of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report as a basis for public consultation.

(A Special Meeting of the Council held on 25th May 2005 endorsed the recommendation of the Cabinet and approved the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report as the basis for public consultation.)

**15. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK:
ST NEOTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

A schedule summarising representations received during consultation on the Urban Design Framework which will guide development in the vicinity of St Neots Community College has been submitted to the Cabinet.

Having recognised that the development of the area as envisaged will be subject to the receipt of detailed planning applications and that the matters raised during consultation will be addressed through the planning process, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Planning Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy to make any consequential amendments to the text and illustrations of the Urban Design Framework document to incorporate those changes proposed.

Subject to the incorporation of these changes, the Cabinet has adopted the Urban Design Framework for St Neots Community College as Interim Planning Guidance.

16. HOUSING ACT 2004

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 and the arrangements required to ensure that the District Council, as local housing authority, is in a position to fulfil its duties under the Act in relation to private sector housing enforcement issues. The Cabinet has agreed to vary the Council's scheme of delegation to authorise appropriate Officers to use a range of powers and duties that are necessary to meet the Council's obligations under the Act. The Cabinet also has extended the availability of mandatory disabled facilities grants to those occupying caravans in the District as their only or main residence and has requested that the Head of Housing Services consider the needs of gypsies and travellers living in the District when reviewing housing needs in accordance with statutory requirements and other relevant corporate strategies.

17. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

Having considered details of schemes in the Medium Term Plan, the Cabinet has agreed to release appropriate funding for additional car parking spaces at Huntingdon Leisure Centre, a private sector housing survey, to meet a deficit in air quality fees, commission work to investigate contaminated land, a vehicle replacement programme,

an older peoples village warden scheme, discretionary repair loans/grants and disabled facilities grants.

18. A14 HUNTINGDON TO CAMBRIDGE – PROPOSED 60 MPH SPEED LIMIT

The Cabinet has expressed its support for a proposal by the Highways Agency to introduce for a trial period a 60mph speed limit on the A14 between Huntingdon and Cambridge. In the long term, however, the Cabinet has indicated its preference for variable speed limits together with SPECS cameras on the section of the A14 from the north west of the Spittals interchange to east of the Histon roundabout to be strategically placed in the vicinity of road junctions.

19. PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON – PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Following on from item No 10 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on the 21st July 2004 and having been acquainted with the responses received from the consultation exercise on the Planning and Urban Design Framework for the redevelopment of the Pathfinder House site in Huntingdon, the Cabinet have agreed to adopt the Framework as Interim Planning Guidance.

20. GROWING SUCCESS: A CORPORATE PLAN

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and by way of report by the Chief Officers Management Team, the Cabinet has considered the content of the replacement Corporate Plan – “Growing Success”. The Plan has been reviewed in relation to the continuing development of the comprehensive performance management framework. Having noted that the designation of the Council as “excellent” has enabled the authority to take advantage of freedoms and flexibilities concerning the publication of Best Value Performance Plans and allowed certain relevant information to be incorporated in the Corporate Plan, the Cabinet has endorsed the content of the document and recommended its approval to Council.

A separate report on the subject appears elsewhere on the agenda for the Council to consider.

21. DISTRICT COUNCIL’S HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION MEMBER’S ADVISORY GROUP

Procurement Issues

The Cabinet has considered proposals for the procurement of the replacement Council Headquarters and other accommodation. Having being acquainted with the requirements of European Union Procurement Regulations, Executive Councillors have decided to –

- ◆ publish in the Official Journal of the European Communities and place an advertisement in the Estates Gazette seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified developers;

- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine a list of not more than six tenderers from the responses to the initial contract notice;
- ◆ note that the Cabinet will be required to approve output specifications for the new building/premises before tenders are issued in June 2005;
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council to develop and approve detailed tender evaluation criteria;
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive to obtain independent evaluations of the Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House site and of the Godmanchester Depot site such that realisable values can be used in the tender evaluation exercise;
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to complete an initial evaluation of tenders received and report thereon to the meeting of the Council on 28th September 2005;
- ◆ note the intention to submit a request to the September meeting of the Council to take a decision on the project based on an initial evaluation of tenders received; and
- ◆ authorise the Chief Executive to enter into post tender clarification with two or more tenderers leading to the submission of best and final offers.

Subsequently, the recommendations of the District Council Headquarters and other Accommodation Members Advisory Group in relation to the output specifications proposed for the Council's future office and other accommodation requirements have been considered by the Cabinet. In that respect, Members noted proposals by the Chief Executive to develop the tender evaluation criteria based on securing the most economically advantageous tender and approved an invitation of tenders that provides opportunities for tenderers to propose payment arrangement including a single payment at the completion of all premises.

Members have agreed that the period between the awarding of the contract and the completion of a development agreement should be kept to a minimum of three months and they have authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine the timing of land transfers within that agreement. This approach will require external, legal and technical advice for which the Cabinet has approved the release of £200,000 from the Medium Term Plan.

With regard to the allocation of space within the new offices, Members have authorised the Chief Executive after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine the final space requirements.

Project Management

The Cabinet has considered proposals to establish a post of Project Director for the proposed procurement and development of a new District Council headquarters.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations and recommendations of the Employment Panel described in item no 4 of their Report, the Cabinet has agreed to retain Mrs E Wilson in a consultancy capacity in connection with the project subject to her prior resignation as an employee of the Council. In acknowledging the specialist nature of this work and on the ground that the engagement of Mrs Wilson in a consultancy capacity will represent the Council's best interest, the Cabinet has approved the adoption of the single tender option as set out in paragraph 5.3E of the Council's Code of Procurement. The Cabinet has also authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Employment Panel, to approve terms for the retention of Mrs Wilson's services.

22. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Cabinet has noted the performance of the District Council's Fund Managers for the period January - March 2005 and respective levels of performance for the year ending 31st March 2005 in the matter of investment of the Council's Capital Receipts.

23. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION – STAFFING

Following consideration of recommendations by the Employment Panel described in item No. 3 of their Report, the Cabinet has approved the associated financial implications of the staffing review within the Information Management Division.

D P Holley
Chairman

**PROPOSED UPGRADE OF A14 ELLINGTON TO FEN DITTON –
HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION
(Report by Director of Operational Services)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider a response to the Highways Agency consultation on the A14 upgrade proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2001 the Cambridge-Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS) recommended a strategy of trunk road and local highway improvements combined with the provision of additional high quality public transport.

- 2.2 The Highways Agency has now published a set of proposals to improve the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton and have consulted on these proposals.

- 2.3 The proposals comprise -

- ◆ A new dualled road between Ellington and Fen Drayton, located to the south of Brampton. The proposed line is further south than that suggested at the time of the CHUMMS Strategy;
- ◆ Widening the existing A14 to dual 3 lanes between Fen Drayton and Fen Ditton;
- ◆ A local access road alongside the widened A14;
- ◆ Major interchanges with A1 at Brampton, the existing A14 at Fen Drayton, and the M11/A428 at Girton.

- 2.4 The current consultation shows that the northbound sliproad on the A1 into Brampton being closed and the connection of Brampton Road to Silver Street in Buckden via a new two-way road alongside the A1, replacing the existing auxiliary southbound lane. However, the Highway Agency have recently produced an alternative which deletes the A14 slip to the southbound A1 and enables the retention of the existing connections between Brampton Road and the A1.

- 2.5 There are 2 possible options for the A1 – Fen Drayton section:

- (a) A dual 3 lane carriageway along the line of the new A14, with the existing A14 being de-trunked, used as a major local public transport route and Huntingdon viaduct being removed around the Brampton Road area and the creation of an at-grade junction at Brampton Road by the Railway Station. This is broadly in line with the CHUMMS recommendations.
- (b) A dual 2 lane road along the line of the new A14, with the existing A14 being kept open to traffic as at present and remaining a trunk road, including the reconstruction of the Huntingdon Viaduct.

- 2.6 The District Council has previously considered the CHUMMS Strategy and the Council's position is attached as Annex A, which was represented to Full Council on 16 February 2005.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 This report will consider the scheme overall (para 3.2 and 3.3) and then will consider specific issues related to the two options (para 3.4, with a SWOT analysis as Annex B).

- 3.2 In considering the scheme overall, it has been suggested that the Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire in partnership with Cambridgeshire Horizons submit a joint Statement of Principles to the Highways Agency as part of their response to the consultation. This will not prescribe the ability of individual Local Authorities then to make particular comments about the scheme if they wish to do so. The following general principles are suggested:

- (a) The proposals to upgrade the A14 and provide additional dual-3 lane highway capacity from the A1/A14 junction at Ellington to the Girton interchange at Cambridge is welcomed and supported.
- (b) The need for the additional highway capacity is becoming critical and it is essential that the Highways Agency work with all speed to implement the proposals.
- (c) The general line of the new A14 is acceptable in that it the best compromise in terms of the distance between the new road and the settlements of Brampton, Buckden, Godmanchester, Fenstanton, Huntingdon and Hilton (see comments regarding issues of noise and mitigation later in the report).
- (d) The limited number of interchanges on the new A14 is to be supported. Any further junctions should be opposed.
- (e) The principle of segregating through traffic from local traffic is one that is considered essential.
- (f) That the decision on the proposal needs to be based not just on highway network considerations, but also the wider long-term economic considerations for the area.

- 3.3 In addition to the matters of principle set out above, the following comments are suggested as a response by the District Council:

- (a) The implications of the choice for the preferred route will have profound and significant economic effects for both the town of Huntingdon and the whole of the area. It is important that the choice made is not based solely on highway network implications, nor just on the environmental effects. It is important that the economic considerations are also taken into account.

- (b) The need to ensure that appropriate noise and visual intrusion mitigation measures are implemented as part of the new road proposals.
- (c) The alignment of the A1 from Alconbury to south of Buckden could be realigned westward to alleviate the environmental effects of the upgrade of the A1 on Buckden and Brampton, but that the potential impact on Brampton Wood SSSI needs to be part of the consideration.
- (d) The current proposals show the alignment of the new A14 from south of Buckden Tip turning northwards and running alongside the western edge of the A1 to join the A14 to the west of Brampton Hut and the widening of the A1 from Brampton Hut to south of Brampton. This will mean that in this area there will be 10 lanes of highway. The Highway Agency should be asked to consider whether there are alternative methods of dealing with the Brampton Hut Interchange which would enable an all-ways junction to be implemented in that location, thus relieving the need for additional widening of the A1 between Brampton Hut and south of Brampton.
- (e) The interchange between the new A14, the A1 and Brampton Hut interchange needs careful consideration and should be fully integrated if at all possible.
- (f) A new access to Alconbury Airfield site should be provided directly onto the de-trunked A14.
- (g) The existing junctions on the current A14 at the Hemingfords need to be considered in terms of safety works.
- (h) The absence of a junction between the new A14 and the A1198 at Godmanchester is supported. If a proposal for a junction were to come forward this should be vigorously opposed.
- (i) The issue of the closure of the A1 sliproad northbound, north of Buckden into Brampton, appears to have been resolved by the Highway Agency producing an alternative as set out earlier in this report. This would certainly alleviate the concern of how lorries would access Buckden Tip. It is essential that any proposals do not encourage through traffic either through Brampton or Buckden.
- (j) The proposals envisage the new A14 coming back on alignment at Fen Drayton with an interchange to accommodate the junction with the old A14 and then a junction shortly after for the Trinity Foot/Cambridge Services area. However, access to the services is not direct from the proposed A14 and HGVs would have to use the local road between Girton and Fen Drayton. It is suggested that the location of the Fen Drayton Interchange should be further investigated so it could be moved

to the Trinity Foot junction thus providing good access to the service areas.

- (k) The proposal for the new A14 includes a viaduct spanning the River Great Ouse and from the information available the height of the viaduct seems excessive. It may be a requirement of the Environment Agency, but the Highway Agency should be asked to ensure that the height of the new viaduct is only that which is absolutely necessary.
- (l) Whilst the proposals for the Girton Interchange are outside the boundary of the Huntingdonshire area, the current proposal does not include for an all-ways junction between the A14, M11 and A428. This could have implications for the traffic movements associated with the A428 and the Highway Agency should be asked to investigate whether an all-ways junction is possible.

3.4 In considering the two options put forward in the consultation for the trunk road network between the A1 and Fen Drayton, the following points need to be considered (the de-trunking option will be referred to as the CHUMMS Option and the continuing use of the existing A14 as a trunk road will be referred to as the Alternative Option):

- (a) Whilst one of the alleged advantages of the Alternative Option is that it is cheaper than the CHUMMS Option by some £30m, the real issue is which option delivers the best long-term highway solution, the most beneficial economic effects in terms of the vitality and long-term viability of Huntingdon, and the capability for development to be accommodated without detriment to the environment. Therefore, the Alternative Option should not be chosen purely on the cost basis.
- (b) In any case, whilst the initial capital estimates indicate that the Alternative Option may be cheaper than the CHUMMS Option, in overall terms the difference in cost is only some £30m and at this stage of the process the ability for contractors to improve on these prices mean that the difference is minimal.
- (c) Huntingdonshire is part of the M11 Growth Area Corridor which the Government has established to deliver significant levels of growth in the coming decades. Huntingdon will play a significant role, not only in the delivery of new housing, but also for a range of new services and facilities, particularly new retail and commercial development, to serve the needs of the growing population of Huntingdonshire. There are 4 major development sites within the town centre of Huntingdon and a major housing development at Ermine Street. These developments require a significant level of investment in order for Huntingdon to remain a vibrant market town that is able to cope with additional traffic and improve its environmental quality. Work towards the implementation of these sites has been predicated on the assumptions drawn from the CHUMMS Strategy that there would be a new A14 and that the current

A14 around Huntingdon and Godmanchester would be de-trunked to become a local road to encourage public transport provision, the development of an integrated public transport interchange and the diversion of existing rat-running traffic in Huntingdon, Godmanchester and St. Ives onto the de-trunked route.

- (d) If the Alternative Option is implemented the community of Brampton would be surrounded on 3 sides by major trunk roads, and the communities of Huntingdon and Godmanchester would continue to suffer major noise and visual intrusion as well as pollution. This would particularly apply in later years as the created capacity would reduce due to predicted traffic growth and the impact of new development, including at Alconbury Airfield, taking effect.
- (e) The line of the new A14 is proposed to be further south from Brampton than was possibly inferred by the CHUMMS line. This does mean that the communities of Buckden and The Offords could experience more visual and noise intrusion than had originally been expected. However, in terms of the two Options, the difference between a dual 2 and a dual 3 road is marginal. The issue therefore for these communities is whether the line of the road is optimal rather than the number of lanes.
- (f) The CHUMMS Option does require that the existing A14 is de-trunked and the viaduct taken down to an at grade junction by the station. In principle, this concept should be supported as it could provide a long-term opportunity for the reorganisation of local traffic movements around and through Huntingdon. This could not be achieved if the alternative option is pursued. However, at the present time there is insufficient information available to enable a firm conclusion to be drawn about whether an at-grade junction at Brampton Road would help to ease the traffic movements or whether it would cause further problems. It is essential that detailed modelling work of this proposed junction is carried out as soon as possible to enable the Council to decide whether this junction has appropriate capacity. Some work is going on at present. However, more detailed modelling is required. This modelling needs to show how the de-trunking of the A14 and the changes at Spittals will affect the through traffic which currently uses the ring road on an east-west movement.
- (g) Since the original CHUMMS Study, transport related air quality issues have been identified in Huntingdon that will result in the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide (NO²) later this year. Having regard to this the CHUMMS Option is much preferred in terms of the expected improvement to air quality within the future AQMA in Huntingdon.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 In any consultation on a new road proposal there will be both benefits and costs to individual local communities. For the District Council, it is important to consider the proposal in the best of interests of the Huntingdonshire community as a whole.
- 4.2 The effects of the decision on Huntingdonshire will be enormous in the long-term and it is essential that the decision is made on the basis of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community. It is not enough for the decision to be based purely on highway network issues.
- 4.3 In considering the information available and the comments in this report, having regard to all of the social, environmental and economic issues, it is recommended that the Council supports the CHUMMS Option.

5. RECOMMENDATION(S)

5.1 That Cabinet:

- (a) Recommend to Full Council that the comments made in this report form the basis of the Council's formal response to the Highways Agency Consultation on the Upgrade of the A14.
- (b) Authorise the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to agree a Statement of Principles with other Cambridgeshire Local Authorities as a joint submission to the Highways Agency based on the principles set out in this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Report to Full Council on 6 December 2000 and 26 September 2001.
2. Highways Agency Consultation Papers – April 2005.
3. CHUMMS Preferred Strategy 2000.

Contact Officer: Mrs E Wilson, Director of Operational Services
☎ 01480 388301

COUNCIL – 16TH FEBRUARY 2005

**A14 – PROPOSALS FOR UPGRADE BRAMPTON HUT TO FEN DITTON
BY COUNCILLOR NICK GUYATT**

As members will recall from previous replies to questions I promised to keep you informed of changes to the proposals or their progress. Since this Council's last full meeting concerns have increased about the work being carried out by the Highways Agency to assess another option for the A14, which did not form part of the original and extensive consultation on CHUMMS. I together with colleagues from the District Council met the Regional Director of the Highway Agency recently.

At the meeting, the Regional Director outlined the process the Agency was using to develop proposals and explained why they were reviewing this further option.

Whilst we found it useful to understand the process that the Agency were going through, and the time delay being incurred, we expressed our concern at the delay and our real fears that 4 years on from the Preferred CHUMMS Strategy there still seems to be some time to go until we see the Highway Agency producing a further consultation prior to a Public Inquiry.

The problems being experienced on a day-to-day basis on the A14 are well known, and it is the District Council's position that urgent action needs to be taken to address these problems so that in the not too distant future the best possible outcome for the residents of Huntingdonshire can be implemented.

Everyone will know that Huntingdonshire is within one of the Government's growth areas and the District Council is working hard with other Councils in Cambridgeshire and its partners to deliver the growth that is required as part of the Government's ambitious housing plans. However, it is essential that the infrastructure that is needed to ensure that growth can be accommodated without significant detriment to existing residents and businesses, and is delivered in a timely fashion. Failure to do so must be regarded as perverse and may throw into jeopardy this Council's ambitious plans for the redevelopment of Huntingdon.

The District Council has a very clear position on the A14. It has accepted the Preferred CHUMMS Strategy which provides for a new dual 3 highway from the A1 south of Brampton, Godmanchester and Fenstanton and then going back online to Girton, as well as the de-trunking of the current A14 around Godmanchester and Huntingdon to provide a local road to improve public transport provision as well as separating local and through traffic. **(Text of the Council's Resolutions on the A14 are attached).**

When we met the Highway Agency we made it very clear that we want a solution that -

- ◆ will enable the proposed developments in Huntingdon to be deliverable in a way that will enable easy access for everyone;
- ◆ maximises future public transport opportunities;
- ◆ is long-term and will deliver the most advantages for most people in the context of growth that has to be delivered;
- ◆ is delivered as quickly as possible.

We expect the Highway Agency to deliver this solution within the existing timetable.

COUNCIL – 6 DECEMBER 2000

At a meeting of Full Council on 6 December 2000 when it considered the 4 Strategies published for consultation, it was resolved:

- (a) that the element of Strategy 4 comprising the construction of a new two/three lane dual carriageway to the south of Huntingdon and then south to Papworth and Caxton Gibbet proceeding eastwards along the A428 to Cambridge be supported;
- (b) that the proposed dual carriageway be constructed to motorway standard with an adjacent service road for use by local traffic and, for safety reasons, with a reduced number of grade separated junctions as currently indicated in the plan;
- (c) that the state of repair/condition of the elevated section of the A14 between the Spittals Interchange and Godmanchester be investigated to ensure it would remain viable for the period to the opening of the new southern road link;
- (d) that improved noise prevention measures be implemented to ease disturbance experienced by local communities currently and in the future;
- (e) that the element of Strategy 3 comprising the construction of a light rail scheme between Cambridge and Huntingdon be supported;
- (f) that improvements to the A428 between Caxton Gibbet and the A1 (T) be classified as essential;
- (g) that urgent short term solutions be sought for the A14; and
- (h) that the aforementioned resolutions be conveyed to GoEast as representing the District Council's formal response to the strategies proposed by the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study.

COUNCIL – 26 SEPTEMBER 2001

At a meeting of Full Council on 26 September 2001 it was resolved:

- (a) that action should be taken as a matter of urgency to address the problem of the A14 and implement solutions to the local transport infrastructure;
- (b) that a comprehensive package of measures should be prepared with a single co-ordinated planning and public inquiry process, as opposed to a piecemeal approach to individual transport improvements;
- (c) that given the lack of investment in the transportation infrastructure locally, the Government should commit sufficient funding to implement a comprehensive programme of measures without delay;
- (d) that the Council reiterate their support for an amended southern strategy that links with the A428 road;
- (e) that in the event of the CHUMMS preferred plan being adopted, the Council support the plan in the interests of expedience only if:-
 - (i) the funding of the scheme is accepted by the Government in its totality (both in terms of the public transport and road improvements elements);
 - (ii) the need to make appropriate provision for local traffic is recognised;
 - (iii) the requirement for further work on the practicability of implementing a guided bus scheme in terms of the District Council's longer term vision for public transport in and around Huntingdonshire similarly is recognised;
 - (iv) there is a satisfactory outcome of an examination of the implications of the proposed alignment of the A1 upon local communities;
 - (v) an examination of potential traffic congestion on and adjacent to the A14 at the Brampton/Spittals interchange is undertaken;
 - (vi) the requirement for bus priority measures at the Caxton Gibbet roundabout is recognised;
 - (vii) the need to address satisfactorily those issues raised in Sections 4.5 (implementation issues), 4.6 (road improvement issues), 4.7 (guided bus route), 4.8 (rail), and 4.9 (other public transport) as set out in the Appendix to the report now submitted is acknowledged; and
- (f) that improvements to the A428 between Caxton Gibbet and the A1(T) should be classified as essential.

ALTERNATIVE SCHEME – SWOT

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provides greater trunk road network management capacity. ❖ Provides more trunk road capacity (8 not 6 lanes). ❖ Capital costs appear lower ❖ Lesser impact on Godmanchester ❖ Limited junctions on new route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If Huntingdon viaduct has to be rebuilt – could provide opportunity for public transport only access to Huntingdon but highway capacity for public transport less as remains trunk road. ❖ Signalisation of Spittals junction. ❖ Creation of direct access to Alconbury Airfield
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Doesn't separate local/through traffic. ❖ Less capacity for public transport usage. ❖ Noise levels for Huntingdon & Godmanchester remain high. ❖ Brampton has 3 x trunk roads around it. No mitigation measures ❖ Reduces scope to get through traffic out of Huntingdon & St. Ives. ❖ No improvement to A1 between Alconbury and new trunk road. ❖ Much reduced improvement to air quality within the future AQMA in Huntingdon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conflicts with Huntingdon town centre vision implementation. ❖ Significant detriment for Fenstanton as trunk road remains and second trunk road added. ❖ The junctions along the existing A14 are sub-standard – would these remain eg. at Hemingfords. ❖ Potential greater impact on The Offords and Buckden. ❖ Filling of created spare capacity by general traffic growth and new development impact, including Alconbury Airfield. ❖ Disruptional aspects to Huntingdon at Brampton Road.

CHUMMS PREFERRED STRATEGY

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gives segregation of through/local traffic. ❖ Upgrade of A1(M) to dual 3 from Buckden to Alconbury. ❖ Provides road 'space' for public transport on existing de-trunked road. ❖ Limited junctions on new route help segregation of local through traffic. ❖ Helps deliver Huntingdon Vision. ❖ Lessens impact on Huntingdon/Godmanchester/Fenstanton. ❖ Significant improvements to air quality expected in the future AQMA in Huntingdon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Implementation of Huntingdon Vision. ❖ Noise mitigation measures for Brampton along A1(M) and at Godmanchester. ❖ Relieving through traffic from Huntingdon & St. Ives
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Possibly greater costs. ❖ Effect on Brampton of upgrade of A1(M) in terms of noise. ❖ Limited Trunk Road access to Cambridge Services (at Swavesey). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Limited access to Brampton Hut services ❖ Junction between de-trunked A14 at Brampton Road (viaduct) needs to be modelled in detail to ensure network efficiency.

Standards Committee

Report of the special meeting held on 6th June 2005

Matters for Information

1. **CODE FOR THE FUTURE – CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**

In Item 14 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 13th April 2005, the Committee reported upon the commencement, by the Standards Board for England, of a consultation process to review the Members Code of Conduct. Before formulating their response to the consultation, the Committee wished to give all Members of the Council the opportunity to submit their views on possible changes to the code. A special meeting of the Committee has therefore been held to conclude the District Council's response by the deadline of 17th June, 2005.

Having endorsed suggested responses to a series of questions relating to key areas in the Code, the Committee has asked the Board to consider whether it should be compulsory for all newly elected Councillors to receive training on the Code of Conduct and ethical framework within a prescribed period of their election to office. Refusal to undertake training then could be regarded a breach of the Code. The Board also has been advised of the Committee's concerns regarding the continuing ability of a Councillor to remain in office pending an appeal hearing despite having been convicted and imprisoned for an offence. It was the Committee's view that in such circumstances the Member had brought his office and authority into disrepute and that imprisonment would prejudice a Member's ability to carry on his duties as a Councillor.

2. **ETHICAL STANDARDS – IN YOUR HANDS**

Further to Item No. 18 of their Report to the last meeting of the Council, the Committee has confirmed the attendance of their Chairman and Vice Chairman, Councillor J Taylor and Messrs D MacPherson and G Watkins at the fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees Conference to be held in Birmingham on 5th and 6th September 2005.

3. **ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Monitoring Officer has been authorised to convene a hearing, comprising Members of the Committee, to consider a report by an Investigating Officer with regard to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct involving Members of Old Hurst Parish Council.

D H Bristow
Chairman

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Development Control Panel

Report of the meetings held on 18th April, 23rd May
and 20th June 2005

Matters for Decision

1. PROPOSED DEPARTURES FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(a) Residential Development (1.3 hectares), land off Bydand Lane and rear of Park Crescent, Little Paxton

Reproduced as Appendix A are details of an outline application for proposed residential development on land currently occupied by industrial and warehouse buildings located off Bydand Lane and rear of Park Crescent, Little Paxton. The application also seeks approval of two means of access from Bydand Lane and adjacent to No. 9 Park Crescent. Siting, design and landscaping matters are reserved for subsequent consideration. As the site comprises 1.3 hectares, it is estimated that it would accommodate some 40 dwellings.

Although in conflict with Local Plan policy and a technical departure from the Development Plan in terms of unit numbers, the Panel has acknowledged that the location of the site has to be assessed against national, regional and local planning policy which promotes the re-use of previously developed land in accessible, sustainable locations for residential purposes particularly where a relationship to a major identified growth area, such as St Neots, can be demonstrated. Although the site is currently in employment use, the Panel has received information which has concluded that existing small businesses could find alternative premises within the locality of St. Neots. As the St. Neots area benefits from a number of existing employment locations and commitments, the Panel, having regard to national planning policies, recognised that it would untenable to seek to retain the site for employment purposes. The Panel also have concluded that the proposed use for the site is acceptable as it would not give rise to a net increase of traffic on the network in peak hours. If the application is approved, a Section 106 Agreement, supported by the Advisory Group will secure affordable housing, open space and play equipment and a contribution towards nursery, primary and secondary school provision. Negotiations are continuing with the applicant regarding the potential for a contribution towards health facilities within Little Paxton. In the light of national

policy guidance, Development Plan policy and other material considerations, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services to include details of estate roads to prevent highway links through the site, the Council approve the application for residential development on land off Bydand Lane and rear of Park Crescent, Little Paxton;**
 - (ii) that, in the event that approval from the Council is forthcoming, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider approval of the proposal and the Director of Operational Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Local Plan; and**
 - (iii) that, should the Government Office be minded to approve the application, the Director of Central Services be authorised to enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space and education.**
- (b) Residential Development (1.3 hectares), land west of the Peoples' Church, Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon**

The Panel has considered an outline application for residential development of 1.5 hectares of Council owned land in Moorhouse Drive, Oxmoor. The site currently comprises public open space with a play area and is known locally as Spider Park. The site forms an integral part of a major re-generation programme for Oxmoor implemented by a partnership of public bodies, the voluntary sector and local residents. Further details of the proposed development are enclosed at Appendix B hereto.

Material to the Panels' deliberations was the Oxmoor Action Plan adopted by the Council as Interim Policy Guidance in 2003. The plan identifies several potential key sites which by their development for residential purposes will provide support for the community and generate necessary funding to allow other improvements to take place. Having regard to the principal issues involved, the Panel has concluded that the loss of open space is acceptable given existing provision on Oxmoor and the intention to establish both a new improved park at Coneygear Road and to re-locate the play area, currently Spider Park, to an adjacent public open space closer to St Johns C Of E school. The Panel has concluded that the provision of additional housing is acceptable, that the

submission of a comprehensive development brief will ensure a high quality scheme which should help to reduce crime and resolve social issues and that details relating to residential amenity, drainage, parking and access can be managed, with care, at reserved matters stage.

Given also the contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education and the Huntingdon Market Town which will result from the associated Section 106 Agreement and the re-generation benefits of the scheme to the Oxmoor, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that, subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services to include those listed in paragraph 7 of Appendix B hereto, the Council approve the application for residential development, on land west of the Peoples' Church, Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon;**
 - (ii) that, in the event that approval from the Council is forthcoming, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider approval of the proposal and the Director of Operational Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Local Plan; and**
 - (iii) that, should the Government Office be minded to approve the application, the Director of Central Services be authorised to enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education and the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy.**
- (c) Residential Development (5.4 hectares), land north-east of Huntingdonshire Regional College, California Road, Huntingdon**

An outline application for residential development of 5.4 hectares located north-east of Huntingdonshire Regional College in California Road, Huntingdon also has been considered by the Panel. Details of the proposal are contained in Appendix C. Whilst the proposed development is a technical departure from the Local Plan, the Panel has acknowledged that their conclusions in respect of the development at Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon (see item No 1 (b) ante also are pertinent to this application. Therefore, and mindful of the weight which should be accorded to the Oxmoor Action Plan, the Panel has concluded that the proposed loss of open space and the principal of additional housing at this location are acceptable. Members also are satisfied that the effect on

residential amenity, highway safety and drainage could be overcome at reserved matters stage. However, the Panel has recognised that the Planning and Design Statement submitted with the application is not as comprehensive as it should be so has requested that an additional condition be imposed to require that a more detailed development brief be prepared prior to the submission of any application for reserved matters. Having noted that a Section 106 Agreement would secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education, off-site footpath/cycleway provision and the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that, subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services to include those listed in paragraph 7 of Appendix C hereto and to the receipt of an amended Planning and Design Statement, the Council approve the application for residential development on land north-east of Huntingdonshire Regional College, California Road, Huntingdon;**
- (ii) that, in the event that approval from the Council is forthcoming, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider approval of the proposal and the Director of Operational Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Local Plan; and**
- (iii) that, should the Government Office be minded to approve the application, the Director of Central Services be authorised to enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education, off-site footpath/cycleway provision and the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy.**

Matters for Information

2. PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON – PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Panel has endorsed the content of the Urban Design Framework (UDF) for Pathfinder House, Huntingdon. Given that it is the purpose of the UDF to offer guidance on architectural and design quality and options for redevelopment of the land currently occupied by Pathfinder House, the Panel has expressed a preference for the site

to comprise a mixed development of dwellings, offices and shops to reflect the existing uses within the ring road and that it should seek to create a sense of community for that part of the town and complement the setting of St. Mary's Church and the Papworth Trust's new centre in Hartford Road. Above all, as a major site and asset in the town centre, the Panel were of the view that the District Council should maximise its potential value. These representations have been forwarded to the Cabinet.

**3. WEST OF STUKELEY ROAD, HUNTINGDON –
URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

The Panel has welcomed the opportunity to comment on a draft Urban Design Framework (UDF) which will lead to the comprehensive development of several areas of land to the west of Stukeley Road, Huntingdon. Having endorsed the content of the UDF, the Panel drew attention to its importance given the various landowners involved in that location and the intention of the guidance to promote access arrangements by the achievement of improved and good quality pedestrian and cycle links from Huntingdon Town Centre and St. Peter's School through to Stukeley Meadows residential area. The representations of the Panel on the UDF have been forwarded to the Cabinet.

4. BEST PRACTICE ADVICE – USE OF GRAMPIAN CONDITIONS

To meet current Government application handling targets and to expedite the determination of all planning applications, the Panel have been acquainted with best practice advice issued by the Planning Officers' Society which encourages the use of appropriately worded restrictive or Grampian conditions. In practice, use of the Grampian conditions would result in the provision of the same level of physical works or contributions to community infrastructure by the applicant or developer but the delivery mechanism for ensuring the provision of such requirements will be post rather than pre the actual planning decision. Having been assured that a breach of any subsequent Grampian condition would be pursued as priority by the Enforcement Team, the Panel has, in light of the best practice advice, endorsed the use of Grampian conditions in appropriate circumstances.

5. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over three meetings the Panel has determined a total of 35 applications of which 26 were approved, 8 refused and one deferred for clarification of details relating to landscaping and the height of the proposed new dwellings.

**6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ACTIVITIES –
1ST JANUARY – 31ST MARCH 2005**

The Panel has considered a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control Section of the Planning Division over the period 1st January – 31st March 2005.

P G Mitchell
Chairman

Case No: 0403101OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)
Proposal: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (1.3 HECTARES)
Location: LAND OFF BYDAND LANE AND REAR OF PARK CRESCENT, LITTLE PAXTON
Applicant: TURRET CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY CO LTD
Grid Ref: 518777 262557
Date of Registration: 07.10.2004
Parish: LITTLE PAXTON

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The application site is located off Bydand Lane and is 1.3 hectares in size. The site is developed with a number of industrial and warehouse buildings built mainly in the 1960's and 1970's. The buildings occupy a large proportion of the area of the site and in between the buildings are areas of concrete hardstanding. The site is served with two access points, an access and egress, from Bydand Lane. A second access to the site exists adjacent to No. 9 Park Crescent which is also in the ownership of the applicant and included within the application site. The boundaries of the site are defined with either walls or fencing. The site is surrounded by established residential housing, either single or two storey in height.
- 1.2 This outline application proposes the residential development of the site and seeks approval for the details of the means of access. The application states that siting, design and landscaping are matters to be reserved for subsequent approval. Access would be from the existing access from Park Crescent. This would be widened by demolishing No. 9 Park Crescent, a semi-detached bungalow. A 5 metre access with two, 2 metre wide footpaths would be provided. The application is also accompanied by a Planning Statement which includes an Illustrative Concept Plan.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1 - Creating Sustainable Communities**, requires planning authorities to deliver sustainable forms of new development by promoting regeneration, healthy economies, the creation of communities and by making more efficient use of land and by reducing the need to travel.
- 2.2 **PPG3 - Housing** contains advice regarding making the best use of previously developed land, development and redevelopment densities and parking provision. The guidance specifically encourages designing for quality in new developments, the use of appropriate

high densities which make efficient use of land and particularly developments that maximise the use of previously developed land for housing (the national target is that 60% of new housing should come from such sources).

- 2.3 **PPG13 - Transport** aims to promote more sustainable forms of development and related integrated transport solutions. In considering sites for housing LPA's should consider their location and accessibility to jobs and services by modes other than the car.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 contains the following policies that are applicable to the proposed development -

- ◆ **P1/1** - sets out the general approach to development within Cambridgeshire (in and where appropriate adjoining the market towns of St Neots, etc).
- ◆ **P1/3** - requires that all new development is of a high standard and is sustainable by minimising the need to travel and car dependency by including amongst other things direct walking and cycling routes, good access by public transport, a mix of housing opportunities and facilities for all sections of the community.
- ◆ **P2/2** - sets out the general policy in respect of the location of employment uses in order to create balance of jobs and housing.
- ◆ **P5/2** - sets out the emphasis on re-using previously developed land and buildings to meet residential needs (with Huntingdonshire having a target of 43% provision on brownfield land).
- ◆ **P5/3** - indicates that housing densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be sought in locations close to a good range of existing or potential services and where there is potential for good public transport accessibility.
- ◆ **P5/4** - requires that provision be made through Local Plans for affordable housing, including key worker housing, and a mix of housing types.
- ◆ **P6/1** - indicates that development will only be permitted where additional infrastructure and community facilities can be secured by agreement.
- ◆ **P8/1** - sets out the link between land use and transport and requires that provision be made to ensure that new development is located in areas that are highly accessible by public transport, cycle and on foot.
- ◆ **P8/3** - indicates that Area Transport Plans will be prepared for the Market Towns to identify transport improvements and the need for transport contributions from development.
- ◆ **P8/5** - Provision of parking

- 3.2 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002 contains the following policies that are relevant to the proposal.

- ◆ **STR1** - sets out the Huntingdonshire settlement hierarchy.
- ◆ **STR2** - Housing groups defined as up to 8 dwellings forming a planned entity, or exceptionally 15 dwellings where the site is within the environmental limits, the development would make best use of land and the overall benefits of estate scale development are strong.
- ◆ **STR5** - designates Little Paxton as a group village.
- ◆ **HL5** - requires that new housing development is of good design, achieves efficient use of land, and provides an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes.
- ◆ **HL6** - expects new housing development to be at least at densities of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare or more.
- ◆ **HL7** - seeks to maximise the re-use of previously developed land for housing purposes.
- ◆ **HL8** - in group villages groups of dwellings and infilling permitted on appropriate sites within environmental limits.
- ◆ **HL10** - Housing to reflect community's needs with choice of housing.
- ◆ **AH1** - definition of affordable housing.
- ◆ **AH2** - method of achieving affordable housing.
- ◆ **AH4** - states that the District Council will seek to achieve 29% affordable housing provision on development sites containing more than 25 dwellings or 1 Hectare in extent in settlements larger than 3000 people.
- ◆ **OB1** - states that the nature and scale of planning obligations will be related to the size of the development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities.
- ◆ **OB2** - states that financial contributions may be sought for the maintenance of open space, children's play space and woodland/landscaping related to the development proposed.

3.3 The following policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995) are applicable to this proposal -

- ◆ **H31** - new housing only permitted where appropriate standards of privacy and amenity can be maintained.
- ◆ **E1** - Promote economic and employment growth.
- ◆ **E2** - Allocation of an adequate range of sites suitable for industry warehousing and offices.
- ◆ **En18** - seeks to protect important site features.
- ◆ **En19** - tree preservation orders made where appropriate.
- ◆ **En20** - requires the execution of landscaping schemes in association with new development.
- ◆ **En25** - all new development to respect scale, form, materials and design of buildings in locality.
- ◆ **R3** - minimum standards for provision of recreation space.
- ◆ **R7** - sets out the District Council's open space standards for new residential development.
- ◆ **R8** - contributions towards improving recreational facilities may be accepted where on site provision is impractical or inappropriate.

- ◆ **R12** - states that children's play areas will be required in new housing areas.
- ◆ **T18** - new development to be accessed by new highways of acceptable design and construction.
- ◆ **T19** - requires that new development incorporate safe and convenient pedestrian routes.
- ◆ **T20** - requires that new development incorporates segregated cycle routes.
- ◆ **T28** - all new developments to meet parking standards.
- ◆ **CS8** - availability of water and sewage disposal facilities.

3.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- ◆ The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2004 gives advice on design considerations.
- ◆ The Guide on Market Housing Mix 2003 provides advice on the mix of dwellings.
- ◆ Trees and Development 1998 provides advice on arboricultural matters.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Numerous previous applications relating to the existing industrial use.

91/1676	Erection of 49 dwellings	Refused
0401156OUT	Outline application for Residential Development	Appeal lodged against Non Determination

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **Little Paxton Parish Council - OBJECTION (copy attached).**
- 5.2 **CCC Local Highway Authority** - given that the development does not give rise to a net increase in trips on the peak hours a contribution to the St Neots Market Town Strategy is not required. The proposed access onto Park Crescent is acceptable to the Highway Authority.
- 5.3 **HDC Environmental Health Officer - NO OBJECTION** but if minded to approve then a condition requiring a contamination investigation will be required.
- 5.4 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue - NO OBJECTION.**
- 5.5 **Environment Agency - NO OBJECTION** but recommend conditions be imposed to investigate and remediate any contamination on the site and require details of foul water drainage.
- 5.6 **County Council Education** - A contribution of £4,450 per dwelling is sought for nursery primary and secondary and primary provision.

5.7 **Head of Housing Services** - 29% affordable housing should be provided.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 **SEVENTEEN** letters of **OBJECTION** have been received which raise the following points -

- ◆ Upkeep of Bydand Lane;
- ◆ Footpath into Church Close is not acceptable to the majority of Church Close residents as will be used by cyclists and dog walkers;
- ◆ Two storey houses will overlook existing bungalows in Park Avenue and Park Crescent - would not object to bungalows;
- ◆ Overloading of sewerage system;
- ◆ Density of surrounding development very low;
- ◆ Existing industrial use inactive at evenings and weekends;
- ◆ The existing industrial site has not external lighting;
- ◆ Existing wildlife on the site;
- ◆ Site provides local employment and its continued use as local employment has not been explored;
- ◆ Previous application was refused;
- ◆ Road safety issues as Park Crescent is used as a local route to schools and shops;
- ◆ Light pollution from car lights;
- ◆ Area lacks affordable small commercial buildings;
- ◆ The Local Plan does not support major house building in Little Paxton;
- ◆ Damage to remaining semi-detached bungalow adjacent to access to access into Park Crescent;
- ◆ Loss of key workers if existing firms have to relocate;
- ◆ Lack of public transport to other industrial estates;
- ◆ Contrary to Policy STR5;
- ◆ Should be limited to two storeys only;
- ◆ Brick wall on eastern and southern boundaries of the site of historic significance should be safeguarded;
- ◆ Object to extension of open space from Church Close as this would change the character of the area and encourage youths to congregate;
- ◆ Demolition vehicles will damage surface of Bydand Lane;
- ◆ Adoption of Bydand Lane following the development;
- ◆ Loss of trees would be unacceptable;
- ◆ Additional noise and disturbance from high density residential development; and,
- ◆ Little Paxton has few services

6.2 In addition, a **PETITION** signed by 21 people **OBJECTING** to the proposal on the grounds of loss of privacy and amenity, possible overlooking, noise pollution, light pollution, wildlife disturbance, increase in vehicular activity, danger to pedestrians and danger and upheaval caused by construction vehicles has been received.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 7.1 Since this is an outline application which seeks approval only for the principle of residential development and the means of access, the only issues to consider are the principle of residential development, access and traffic issues, Section 106 considerations and third party considerations.

Principle of Residential Development

- 7.2 The application site is located within the defined village environmental limit for Little Paxton. It is likely that a development of the scale proposed would be in conflict with the basis of HLP Policies STR1 and STR3 which define the settlement hierarchy and designate Little Paxton as a group village (suitable to accommodate small scale developments of up to 15 dwellings). (Although the numbers of dwellings are not known at this stage, as the site is 1.3 hectares in size at least 40 dwellings will be proposed.) However, it is considered that the location of the application site must also be assessed in respect of the national, regional and local planning policy perspective that seeks to maximise the re-use of previously developed land in accessible sustainable locations for residential purposes. The application site is so closely related to the identified growth centre of St Neots that it practically must be considered in respect of the group of up-to-date policies that seek to encourage appropriate forms of residential redevelopment (CSP Policies P1/1, P5/2 and HLP Policies STR1, STR3 and HL7).
- 7.3 This application site is a 'windfall' residential development site that needs to be assessed on its planning merits. Whilst it is accepted that residential development of the scale envisaged would be a technical departure from the Development Plan it is contended that in reality this is a sustainable location, directly related to a major identified growth area, where planning policy could support a departure from the settlement strategy defined by the Development Plan. Previous Panel resolutions have supported the development of both the Island and Riverside Mill sites in Little Paxton, both of which are developments of over 15 dwellings.
- 7.4 The existing site is currently in employment use and the Parish Council and others have questioned the appropriateness of its loss for employment purposes. In the absence of an applicable general employment site safeguarding policy it is necessary to evaluate this proposal against the raft of national policies and statements that now encourage LPA's to actively seek to re-use none viable employment sites for other purposes. The buildings, built in the 1960's and 1970's provide small scale business premises for B2 employment uses. The Council has commissioned a study to determine the demand for such small units and this has concluded that existing small businesses would not it difficult to find alternative premises if forced to relocate. The general St Neots area also benefits from a wealth of existing employment locations and commitments and against that background it is considered that it would be untenable to seek to retain this site for employment purposes. The development of this site for residential

use represents a sustainable form of development since a wide range of employment opportunities are available in the surrounding local area.

- 7.5 The principle of residential development is therefore consistent with both national and Development Plan policies.

Access and Traffic Issues

- 7.6 The application seeks approval for the means of access and this involves the improvement of an existing access from Park Crescent. The illustrative concept plan and planning statement submitted with the application states that it is envisaged that a number of the properties would be served from Bydand Lane. The County Council as local highway authority have considered the proposed access arrangements in relation to the existing industrial use and the proposed residential use and have stated that this is acceptable.

- 7.7 The issue of traffic generation from the proposed use has also been considered and as it would not give rise to a net increase in trips on the network in peak hours it is not appropriate to request a contribution to the St Neots Market Town Strategy.

Section 106 Issues

- 7.8 The impact of the proposed use needs to be considered in relation to any necessary mitigation measures. Transport mitigation has been considered above.

Affordable Housing

- 7.9 Policy AH4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 1998 states that on sites of over 1 hectare in size 29% of the dwellings should be affordable. Housing Services have recommended that the affordable housing contribution shall be free serviced land sufficient to provide 29% of the total number of dwellings on the site as affordable, plus a capital contribution of £17,644 per affordable dwelling. The applicant has agreed to this contribution subject to no new central government guidance being issued before this application is determined.

Open Space

- 7.10 Policies R7 and R8 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Policy OB2 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration Plan provides for the provision of open space and/or contributions on new residential developments of over 10 or more dwellings. The Council considers that children's casual and equipped play space should be provided on site. The play equipment would need to be assessed by the Council. A commuted sum of £8,600 should be provided for maintaining the grass and the equipment and a further commuted sum of £7,500 is required in lieu of on site provision of youth/adult play space. The applicant has agreed to this contribution.

Education

- 7.11 Policy OB1 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration and Policy P6/1 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan require that appropriate infrastructure should be provided when sites are developed in order to mitigate the impact of that development. The Education Authority has requested that a contribution of £4,450 per dwelling should be provided. This is calculated as £700 for nursery provision, £1,750 for primary provision and £2,000 for secondary provision. The applicant has agreed to this contribution.
- 7.12 In order to ensure the above requirements are met in the event of planning permission being granted, the applicant would need to enter into a Section 106 Agreement.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This application proposes that this brownfield site be redeveloped for residential purposes. The study commissioned by the Council to examine the demand for employment sites concluded that there was insufficient demand to justify the retention of this site for employment uses, and in the absence of a Development Plan policy protecting employment sites the application could not be refused for this reason. This is a windfall site and whilst this proposal would be a departure from the Development Plan, in terms of the scale of the proposed development, it is considered that this proposal can be supported because of the contribution that the development would make towards meeting the housing needs of the area in what must be considered to be an appropriate sustainable location.
- 8.2 In considering this application the Council, acting in respect of its role as the Local Planning Authority, has had regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, comprising the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003, the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 as altered by the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002, and to all other material considerations. In the light of national planning policy guidance, Development Plan policies and other material considerations it is recommended that planning permission be granted for the development as proposed.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That the application be referred to Council and then the Government Office for the East of England as a significant departure from the Development Plan.
- 9.2 That, subject to the application not being called in by GO-East, the Director of Central Services be **AUTHORISED** to enter into an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the social and physical infrastructure contributions outlined in this report.
- 9.3 That, subject to the completion of the above the planning application is **APPROVED** subject to conditions to include the following:

01013	Details reserved minus access
01002	Plans and particulars in writing
01003	Reserved matters within three years
01004	Dates for submission of details
03019	Access/dwelling
15001	Contaminated land scheme
15002	Scheme shall include investigation
15003	Development not commence
06004	Tree details
06007	Tree retention, maintenance and protection
06008	Details of proposed trees
06010	Landscape design
06011	Soft landscape
06012	Hard and soft landscape implementation
10002	Public Open Space Scheme
06015	Boundary treatment
06016	Landscape management plan
09003	Lighting scheme before dev
13003	Permitted Development (Extensions)
04002	Foul water only

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File Reference: 0403101OUT
Huntingdonshire Local Plan
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan

CONTACT OFFICER - Jennie Parsons, Development Control Team Leader
☎ 01480 388409.

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Huntingdonshire

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE29 3TN

Head of Planning Services
Pathfinder House
St. Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire PE 29 3TN

ANNEX

Application Number: 0403101OUT Case Officer Jennie Parsons
Proposal: Residential development (1.3 hectares)
Location: Land Off Bydand Lane And Rear Of Park Crescent Little Paxton
Observations of LITTLE PAXTON Town/Parish Council.

Please ✓ box as appropriate

Doc1820

Recommend **approval** because(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

*

Recommend **refusal** because...(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

* Please see the attached letter reference Doc1821.doc dated 22 October 2004.

No observations either in favour or against the proposal

.....Clerk to LITTLE PAXTON Town/Parish Council.

Date : 22 October 2004.

Failure to return this form within the time indicated will be taken as an indication that the Town or Parish Council do not express any opinion either for or against the application.

Tel 01480 388388 Fax 01480 388099

mail@huntsdc.gov.uk www.huntsdc.gov.uk

PLANNING SERVICES

dcparish.rtf



LITTLE PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL.

(Clerk of the Council. Mr J.Coupe. 1. Hall Close. Little Paxton. St Neots. Cambs. PE19 6QS)
(Telephone. 01480 474850.) (e-mail. littlepaxton@hotmail.com)

Doc1821.doc

Huntingdonshire District Council.
Planning Department.
Pathfinder House.
St Mary's Street.
Huntingdon.
Cambs.
PE29 3 TN.

22 October 2004.

Attention. Mrs. Jennie Parsons.

Dear Mrs. Parsons.

Planning Application 0403101OUT.
Proposal. Residential development (1.3 hectares)
Location. Land off Bydand Lane. Little Paxton.

The Parish Council's response and comments remain the same as those stated within our letter dated 25 May 2004 when the planning application was issued under reference 0401156OUT. The comments are as follows.

Little Paxton Parish Council recommends the refusal of the above outline planning application for the following reasons.

1. We believe the proposed development is in contravention of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, Deposit Plan 1998, adopted in 2002 where settlement strategy STR5 identifies Little Paxton as a Group Village. Paragraph 1.12 states that new proposals for estates coming forward on previously unidentified sites will not be acceptable in Group villages other than in exceptional circumstances. These are not exceptional circumstances.
2. The development proposal comprises up to 43 dwellings. This is in contravention of Settlement Strategy STR2 as the site is within the environmental limits of the village where no more than 15 dwellings in a planned entity are permitted.
3. The site is claimed to be a 'brownfield' site by the applicant but it is not identified in the adopted plan neither does it have planning permission for housing. It is an industrial site and is far from being vacant or derelict and currently employs over 200 persons. Should the site be approved for housing development, employment within Little Paxton will be seriously diminished with the subsequent effect on residents currently employed at this site either having to look for work away from the village, relocate or travel further to work with the subsequent increase in the use of private cars.



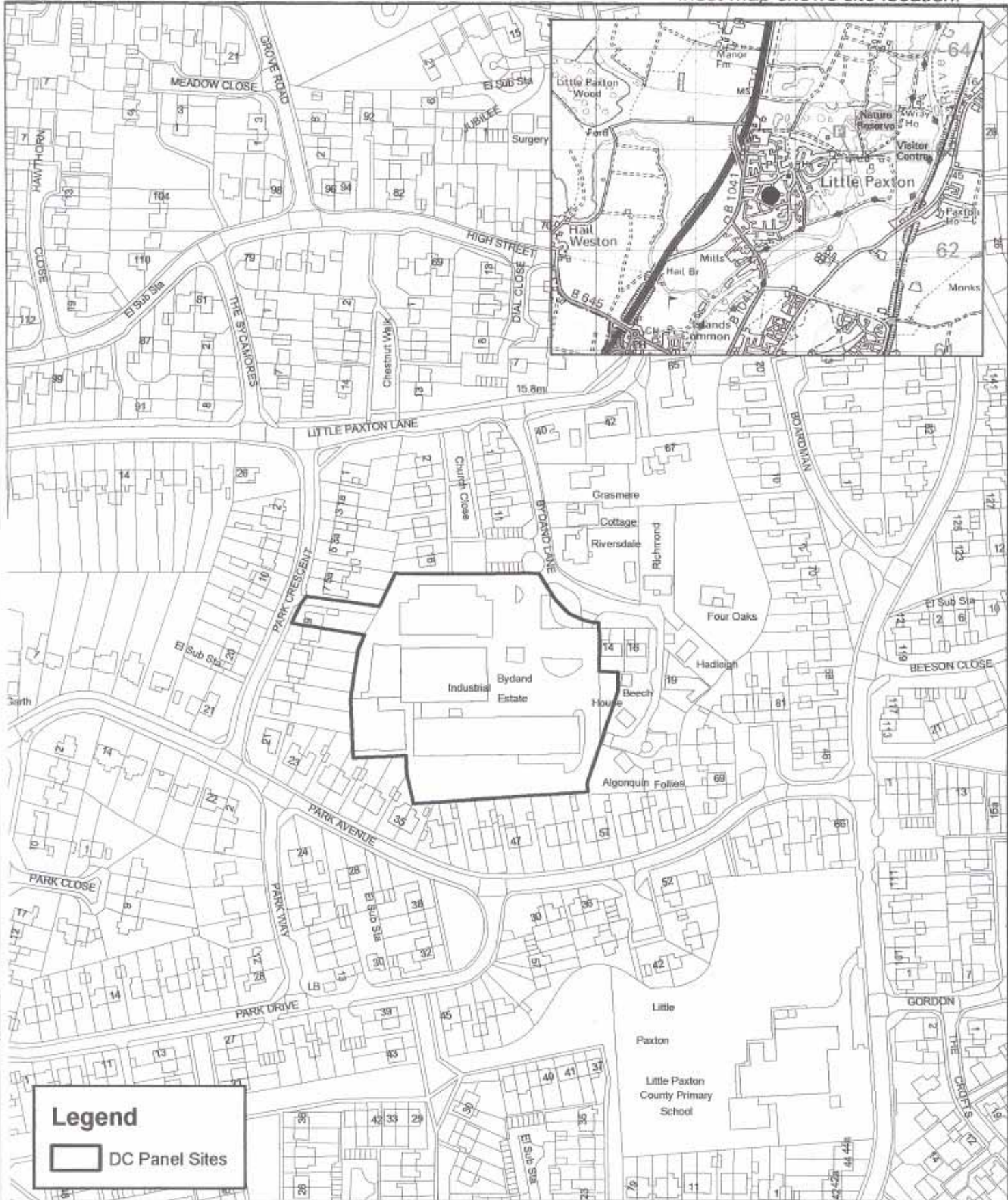
4. The proposed site entrance / exit at Park Crescent will generate a volume of traffic and activity, which would be prejudicial to the environment and present character of the area. It will also cause severe problems to the detriment of existing residents affecting their privacy and amenity in this relatively secluded low-density area.

5. All of the existing properties in Park Crescent and Park Avenue are single level bungalows, the proposal will therefore, by reason of its close relationship to the surrounding properties give rise to a cramped form of development to the detriment of the visual amenities of the locality, and the privacy and amenity of the adjoining properties.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long tail, positioned to the right of the closing text.

Jack Coupe.
Parish Clerk



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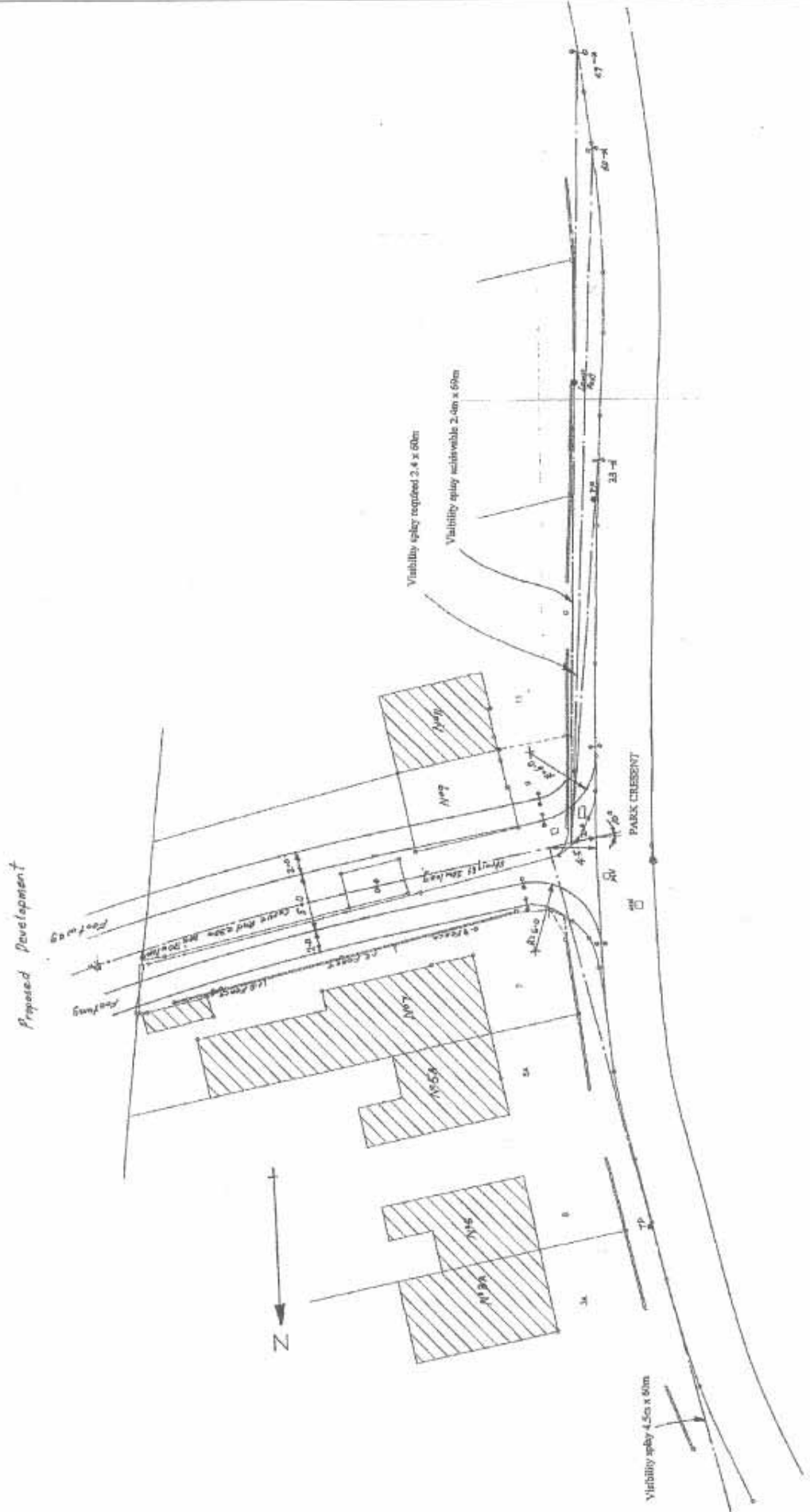
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Huntingdonshire

district council

Parish: Little Paxton





Little Paxton

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Case No: 0500835OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)
Proposal: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (1.3 HECTARES)
Location: LAND WEST OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH
MOORHOUSE DRIVE, HUNTINGDON
Applicant: HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Grid Ref: 524336 273225
Date of Registration: 16.03.2005
Parish: HUNTINGDON

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application site is located in Moorhouse Drive in Oxmoor. It is currently an area of public open space with a play area, known locally as the Spider Park. The former People's Church is also located within the application site. The application site is virtually surrounded by residential properties.

The application is for residential development of 1.5 hectares of land. It is an outline application. The application form indicates that all matters are to be reserved for subsequent approval. A detailed development brief has however been submitted in support of the application.

The land is owned by this Council.

A public exhibition was held on 15 and 16 April to publicise the proposal.

This site is an integral part of a major regeneration programme for the area being implemented by a partnership of public bodies, the voluntary sector and residents

1. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 1.1 **Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development 2005** provides general advice on the planning system.
- 1.2 **Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 Housing 2000** - provides advice on housing related development. It stresses that the best use needs to be made of land and recommends that densities should be in excess of 30 dwellings per hectare at least and higher than this in town centre locations and in areas which are well served by public transport. It also stressed the importance of good design.
- 1.3 **Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 1991** - Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation - discourages the use of existing open space for built development in the absence of a local authority audit to show

that the space is surplus to requirements. It does however recognise that not all open space is of equal merit and that some may be available for alternative uses. The local community is to be consulted to demonstrate that the loss of open space is supported.

2 PLANNING POLICIES

2.1 The following policies in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant -

- ◆ **P1/1** - sets out where new development should be located. Market towns like Huntingdon are identified as locations for new development
- ◆ **P1/3** - indicates that a high standard of design and sustainability will be required for all new development
- ◆ **P5/3** - indicates that densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare will be required in areas close to a good range of services and where access to public transport is good and that densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be permitted.
- ◆ **P5/4** - indicates that local plans should make provision to meet locally assessed need for -
 - Affordable housing including key workers
 - One and two bedroom homes
 - Housing suitable for elderly and those with mobility problems
 - Other groups including students, homeless, travellers, and gypsies
- ◆ **P4/3** - indicates that existing open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities should not be developed for another use if they are required to meet local needs unless alternative equally satisfactory provision can be made elsewhere in the local plan
- ◆ **P6/1** - indicates that development will only be permitted where the additional infrastructure and community benefits generated by the proposals can be secured.

2.2 The following policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan are relevant -

- ◆ **En25** - Indicates that the District Council will expect new development to respect the scale form materials and design of established buildings in the locality and make adequate provision for landscaping and amenity areas
- ◆ **R17** - indicates that the District Council will have regard to policy R1 and the standards set out in policy R3 and other policies of the local plan in determining whether alternative developments should be permitted on existing or proposed recreation or amenity areas including school playing fields.
- ◆ **R1** - indicates that the District Council will promote recreation and leisure projects of District wide significance

- ◆ **R3** - sets out standards for the provision of open space- in settlements of more than 1000 this is based on the standard of 2.43 ha(6 acres) per 1000 population.

2.3 The following policies in the Huntingdonshire Local plan Alteration are relevant -

- ◆ **STR1** - outlines the settlement hierarchy
- ◆ **STR3** - selects Huntingdon as a market town
- ◆ **HL5** - indicates that good design and layout will be required for all new housing development
- ◆ **HL6** indicates that housing densities will be between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare
- ◆ **AH1** defines affordable housing
- ◆ **AH2** indicates that to achieve affordable housing the District Council will require developers to undertake that the rent or purchase price of such housing is below the lowest price at which a choice of properties can be found.
- ◆ **AH3** - sets out the target for affordable housing
- ◆ **OB1** - the nature and scale of obligations sought from development will be related to the size of the development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services
- ◆ **OB2** - financial contributions may be sought for the maintenance of children's play space and recreational facilities woodland or landscaping.

2.4 The Oxmoor Action Plan is also relevant

2.5 This plan has been adopted by the Council as Interim Policy Guidance. The Action Plan deals with the land use and spatial aspects of the wider programme to regenerate the area through the government's SRB programme and the government's Sustainable Communities Programme. The Plan identifies that new development supporting the community in Oxmoor is key to the generation of necessary funding to allow improvements to come forward. It highlights that a number of sites have the potential for residential development one of which is the application site.

2.6 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2002 is also relevant. This provides advice on how to ensure that development schemes embody the principles of good design.

3. **PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 None

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 **Huntingdon Town Council - NO OBJECTION (Copy attached)**

4.2 **Local Highway Authority - NO OBJECTION**

- 4.3 **Head of Housing - NO OBJECTION** subject to affordable housing provision
- 4.4 **Parks Manager-** No formal comments received
- 4.5 **Environment Agency** - No comments received
- 4.6 **CC Chief Financial Planning Officer** - Contribution towards education required
- 4.7 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** - Adequate provision will need to be made for fire hydrants
- 4.8 **County Archaeologist** - recommend that site should be subject to programme or archaeological investigation.
- 4.9 **Head of Housing** - requires provision of affordable housing
- 4.10 **Countryside Services Team CCC** - Public bridleways 32 and 32 are adjacent to the east and west of the site but would appear not to be effected.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 **THREE** letters of **OBJECTION** and a petition with 92 names received the concerns being -
 - ◆ Loss of open space/spider park
 - ◆ Increase in number of residents in Oxmoor, which will add to parking problems
- 5.2 In addition 12 residents completed the forms at the exhibition, which was held in April. As however these residents were commenting on this proposal and the proposal for California Road and other works in Oxmoor it is difficult to extract their views on this specific scheme, and the summaries set out below relate to both this scheme and the scheme at California Road. 7 residents indicated that they did not support the proposals, 2 residents indicated that they supported the proposals and 3 residents had no opinion either way.
- 5.3 The concerns of the residents who did not support the proposals are -
 - ◆ Loss of public open space
 - ◆ Additional traffic
 - ◆ Traffic calming on bend of Moorhouse Drive a waste of money - required on other sections of the road
 - ◆ Are walkways across green adjacent College to be kept open during building process
 - ◆ Where will teenagers go who congregate at night
 - ◆ Too many houses being built within Oxmoor - insufficient infrastructure to support it ie shops, hospitals, doctors, dentists
 - ◆ Nothing is being provided for young people - need facilities like ice skating rink and larger swimming pool

- ◆ Few facilities for disabled people- need a purpose built centre for disabled people
- ◆ Moorhouse Drive is often boggy
- ◆ Concerned that play area at California Road will not be big enough for football
- ◆ Why are only houses(in California Road Scheme) to have visual impact- everyone deserves an attractive home
- ◆ Excessive density can result in social issues

5.4 The residents who support the scheme make the following comments -

- ◆ Excellent chance to improve a very scruffy area
- ◆ Good to see removal of church as it is dangerous
- ◆ More facilities needed however to accommodate extra people in area such as schooling, shops, leisure facilities and parks
- ◆ Very impressed with the Coneygear Park Plans
- ◆ Impressed with Local Authorities efforts to improve the environment

5.5 The residents who neither supported or opposed the proposals made the following comments -

- ◆ Bridge at Sapley Square needs vandal proofing
- ◆ Older people need housing that will allow downsizing not just young people
- ◆ Children need places to play football
- ◆ Issue of child safety needs to be considered
- ◆ Concerned that exhibition clashed with another event. Queried whether options had been widely advertised.
- ◆ Will disability and elderly problems be dealt with

5.6 The Huntingdon Civic Society objects to the application for the following reasons -

- ◆ The site is well used as a secure children's - developing site would force children to play at the smaller more cramped play area behind St John's School
- ◆ There is semi-wild planting around the site which provides a habitat for wildlife
- ◆ The new development adjacent the College at California Road will provide a new population to use the play area.
- ◆ If refurbished the "People's Church" could be used in conjunction with play area to provide much needed secure nursery facilities.

6. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

6.1 The issues which need to be considered relate to whether the loss of the open space is acceptable; whether the principle of providing additional housing is acceptable; the content of the Development Brief; the effect on residential amenity; the effect on highway safety; drainage; crime prevention; and the benefit of the scheme to the regeneration of the area.

Loss of open space

- 6.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 stresses that there is a need to consider both the quantity and quality of the open space provision. It recommends that audits should be carried out to assess the quality of open space.
- 6.3 An audit has been carried out for Huntingdon. This included an analysis of the two types of open space - formal recreational and informal open space. This found that there was a total of 47.22 hectares of formal recreational space and 113.04 hectares of informal open space in Huntingdon. Overall, it was concluded that Huntingdon had a surplus of 16.79 hectares of formal recreational open space.
- 6.4 Oxmoor is also well supported in terms of existing formal pitch provision with both Sapley Park and King George V playing fields within easy reach. The Jubilee Fields at Kings Ripton Road require car borne access but Oxmoor is the nearest part of Huntingdon to these facilities.
- 6.5 Moorhouse Road is one of four sites identified in the Oxmoor Action Plan for housing. The development of these four sites would reduce the level of informal open space in Huntingdon to 105.05 hectares. Even allowing for the development of these sites Oxmoor would still have more informal open space per residents than other more modern developments in Huntingdon. There are 4.12 ha of informal open space per thousand people in Oxmoor. In Stukeley Meadows the ratio is 4.01 Ha per thousand population in Hinchingsbrooke 2.43 Ha per thousand population and in Sapley Road 1.33 Ha per thousand population.
- 6.6 Open space is integral to the character and layout of Oxmoor. All houses are within 100 metres or 1 minute walk of open spaces associated with housing. The Oxmoor Action Plan concluded that these small pockets of open space are close and safer to access than some of the larger more remote areas. Whilst Moorhouse Road is currently a valuable area of open space because it has a play area on it this is to be relocated to the adjacent area of public open space, as the attached plan shows. The Action Plan identifies open spaces where the investment of resources gained from the loss of other open spaces will be directly used to fund quality improvements including the establishment of a new park at Coneygear Road. Plans have already been drawn up for this. A comprehensive programme of open space/greenspace improvements are being put in place to enhance the quality and usability of open space areas in Oxmoor.
- 6.7 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 indicates that proposals to develop areas of space should be supported by the local community. In preparing the Oxmoor Action Plan consultation with the local community was carried out and residents agreed that -
- ◆ There was a large amount of open space on the estate
 - ◆ It was mostly of a uniform kind managed in the same way

- ◆ There were different sorts of spaces that could be treated in distinctly different ways

6.8 Objections to the loss of the open space have however been received from nearby residents. Many of the residents however would appear to have misunderstood the proposal and not appreciated that the play area is only to be moved a short distance onto an adjacent area of open space (as the attached plan shows).

Suitability for housing

6.9 The site is located within the built up area of Huntingdon and therefore the principle of developing the site for housing is acceptable. Policy HL5 in the Alteration to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan requires the best use to be made of land and policies P5/3 in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and Policy HL6 in the Alteration to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan require that the density of development be at least 30 dwellings per hectare and more for sites well served by public transport. The development brief indicates that the site should be developed at an average density of 40 dwellings per hectare.

Development Brief

6.10 A very comprehensive development brief has been submitted with the application and this should help to ensure a high quality scheme at reserved matters stage. If a scheme is well designed it can reduce crime problems and social issues.

Effect on residential amenity

6.11 As this is an outline application no details of the proposed dwellings are available. The concept drawings however included within the development brief indicate how the land could be developed without effecting residential amenity.

Parking and access

6.12 Residents have expressed concern that the additional housing will increase parking problems in the Oxmoor. This will be a matter to be considered at reserved matter stage and care will need to be taken to ensure that the parking standards applied are appropriate to the area. The Highway Authority has advised that traffic calming in California Road is unnecessary.

Interim Planning Policy - Oxmoor Action Plan

6.13 The development of this site is an integral part of wider planning policies related to environmental improvements and the development of a new District Centre to serve the Oxmoor area. Both the development of this site and the new District Centre at Sapley Square are part of the government's Sustainable Communities Programme and implementation is interrelated. In considering this proposal the environmental, economic and social objectives being promoted for

Oxmoor should be accorded weight although technically the proposal will need to be referred to Full Council and the Government Office as a departure from the Local Plan should the Panel be minded to support the proposal. The Interim Planning Guidance whilst not part of the Development Plan is a material consideration which should be afforded weight in the decision making process especially as it has emerged from extensive consultation and involvement with the community and parties including the Primary Care Trust, County Council, Town Council and resident groups.

- 6.14 As part of the Oxmoor Action Plan measures are being put in place to improve the existing infrastructure. A new medical centre is under construction, which will not just include a doctor's surgery but other related health care provision. Sapley Square shops are being redeveloped. Environmental improvements are being carried out and Coneygear Park is to be improved. It would be inappropriate to provide facilities such as an ice rink or large swimming pool in Oxmoor. Central government advice is that the first choice of location for such facilities should be within town centres.

Youth, elderly and disabled issues

- 6.15 The concerns which have been expressed about the need for provision for teenagers, the elderly and disabled are noted however they do not relate specifically to the consideration of this application.

Planning obligations

- 6.16 The proposal is of a size, which would normally generate the need for contributions to -

- ◆ Affordable housing
- ◆ Open space
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Market town strategy

- 6.17 As the land is owned by this Council the level of contributions can be controlled through the sale of the land rather than through a Section 106 Agreement, which would be the usual mechanism.

- 6.18 As usual 29% of dwellings will need to be for affordable housing.

- 6.19 The Parks Manager has advised that normally for a scheme of this size the following commuted sums are required for off site play equipment and open space.

1. Children's play equipment

Capital costs £36,000
Maintenance Costs £9,500

2. **Children's and youth/adult open space**

Children's open space

Capital costs £1260

Maintenance costs £3240

Youth/adult open space

Capital costs £2,500

Maintenance costs £6,480

- 6.20 In this case however there is an existing play area which is to be moved and additional equipment is also to be added. There is therefore no requirement to provide a LEAP/NEAP. Additional equipment is also to be added to this play area. Improvements are planned for Coneygear Park and this meets the youth/adult open space requirement.
- 6.21 The Highway Authority has requested the usual contribution towards the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy. A number of Environmental Improvements have been carried out and are planned in Oxmoor and in this case, having regard to the regeneration needs of Oxmoor it is considered that it would be appropriate to concentrate expenditure directly in Oxmoor, rather than spend it throughout the town.
- 6.22 The County have requested a contribution towards education of £1,600 per dwelling.
- 6.23 In conclusion, whilst the proposal is technically contrary to the Local Plan there are material considerations, which include the surplus of open space in Oxmoor, and the regeneration benefits of the scheme to Oxmoor support this proposal. It is therefore recommended that the application be forwarded to Full Council and the Government Office as a departure from the development plan with a recommendation that permission be granted subject to conditions to include the following.

7. **RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE**, subject to conditions to include the following:

- 01001-** Details reserved
- 01003 -** Reserved matters within three years
- 01004 -** Dates for submission of details
- Nonstand -** Development brief
- Nonstand -** Grampian re contributions
- Nonstand -** Archaeology
- Nonstand -** Fire hydrants

Nonstand - Levels

Nonstand - Highway details and construction

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File Reference: 0500835OUT
Huntingdonshire Local Plan
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan

Contact Officer: Sue Wheatley Development Control Team Leader
☎ 01480 388490

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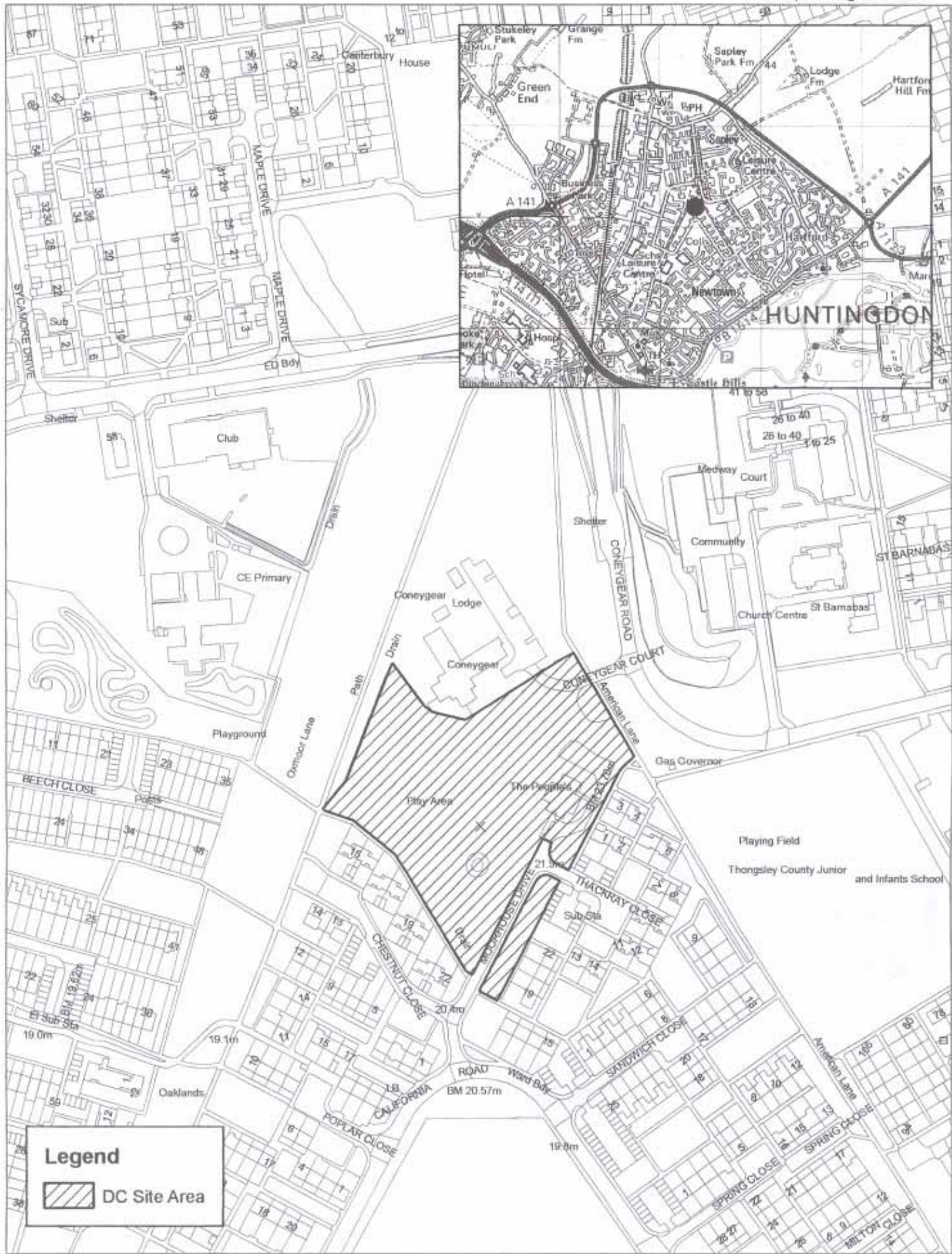
0500835OUT

WEST 2

Huntingdonshire District Council, c/o Agent, Mr.K R.
Phillips, Estates Property Manager, Pathfinder House,
St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN

Residential Development (1.3 hectares) Land West of The Peoples Church Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon

Recommend APPROVAL. The development meets an existing local housing need.



Legend

 DC Site Area

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Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Parish: Huntingdon PE29 1BJ

Social and community context

Just to the north of the site lies the local shopping centre at Sapley Square. It is shortly to be redeveloped to include new shops and a new 'Acorn' health Centre, a new health centre to cover all of Huntingdon as well as the villages to the north of the town.

The Medway Community Centre also lies just to the north of the site. A primary school lies to the other side of Oxmoor Lane and other schools and facilities are close by.

Playgrounds

The existing playground on the site will be relocated to land on the adjacent Oxmoor Lane open space (See figure 8).

Some open space should be provided with the development itself, but there is plenty of adjacent open space available to accommodate the relocated playground.

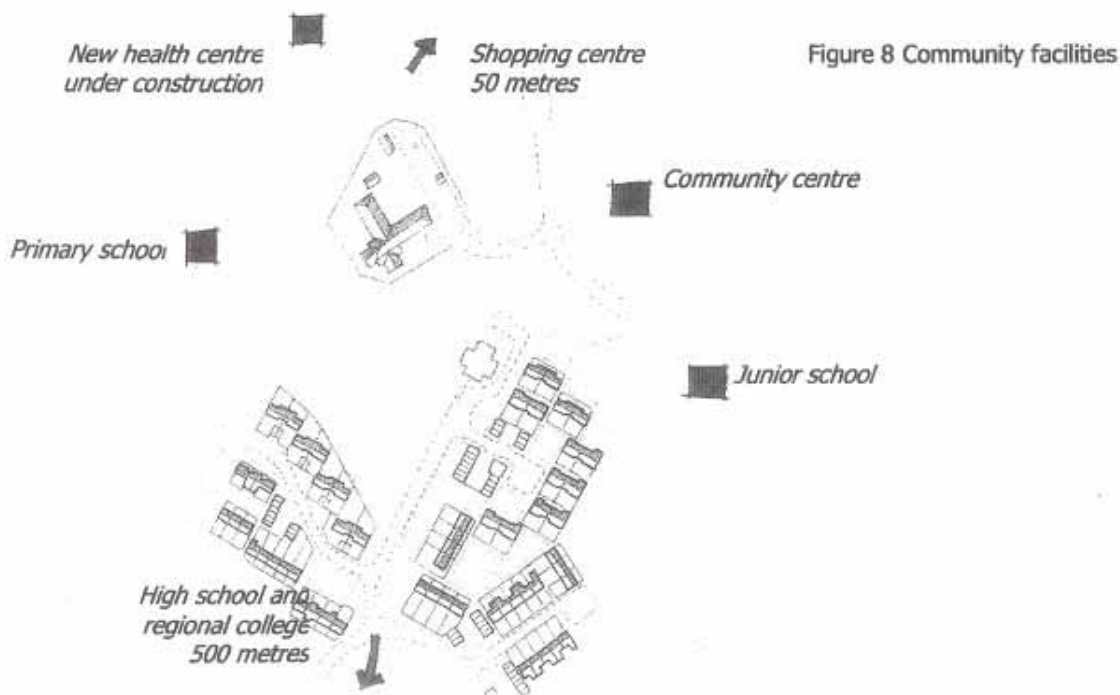




Figure 11 – The concept



Figure 12 – Axonometric sketch

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Case No: 0500836OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)

Proposal: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (5.4 HECTARES)

Location: LAND NORTH EAST OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA ROAD, HUNTINGDON

Applicant: CAMBS COUNTY COUNCIL AND HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE

Grid Ref: 524363 272925

Date of Registration: 16.03.2005

Parish: HUNTINGDON

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application site is located in California Road in Oxmoor. It is currently an area of public open space. Part of the site is owned by the County Council and the remainder by the Regional College, which is situated to the south west of the application site. Residential properties are located to the west north and east.

The application is for residential development of 5.4 Hectares of land. It is an outline application with all matters to be reserved for subsequent approval. A Planning and Design Statement and Transport Assessment have been submitted with the application.

A public exhibition was held on 15 and 16 April to publicise this proposal.

This site is an integral part of a major regeneration programme for the area being implemented by a partnership of public bodies, the voluntary sector and residents.

1. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 1.1 **Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development 2005** provides general advice on the planning system.
- 1.2 **Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 Housing 2002** - provides advice on housing related development. It stresses that the best use needs to be made of land and recommends that densities should be in excess of 30 dwellings per hectare at least and higher than this in town centre locations and in areas which are well served by public transport. It also stressed the importance of good design.
- 1.3 **Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 1991 - Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation** - discourages the use of existing open space for built development in the absence of a local authority audit to show that the space is surplus to requirements. It does however

recognise that not all open space is of equal merit and that some may be available for alternative uses. The local community is to be consulted to demonstrate that the loss of open space is supported.

2. PLANNING POLICIES

2.1 The following policies in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant:

2.2 **Policy P1/1** - sets out where new development should be located. Market towns like Huntingdon are identified as locations for new development

2.3 **P1/3** - indicates that a high standard of design and sustainability will be required for all new development

2.4 **P5/3** - indicates that densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare will be required in areas close to a good range of services and where access to public transport is good and that densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be permitted.

2.5 **P5/4** - indicates that local plans should make provision to meet locally assessed need for -

- ◆ Affordable housing including key workers
- ◆ One and two bedroom homes
- ◆ Housing suitable for elderly and those with mobility problems
- ◆ Other groups including students, homeless, travellers, and gypsies

2.6 **P4/3** - indicates that existing open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities should not be developed for another use if they are required to meet local needs unless alternative equally satisfactory provision can be made elsewhere in the local plan

2.7 **P6/1** - indicates that development will only be permitted where the additional infrastructure and community benefits generated by the proposals can be secured.

2.8 The following policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan are relevant:

2.9 **En25** - Indicates that the District Council will expect new development to respect the scale form materials and design of established buildings in the locality and make adequate provision for landscaping and amenity areas

2.10 **R17** - indicates that the District Council will have regard to policy R1 and the standards set out in policy R3 and other policies of the local plan in determining whether alternative developments should be permitted on existing or proposed recreation or amenity areas including school playing fields.

- 2.11 **R1** - indicates that the District Council will promote recreation and leisure projects of District wide significance
- 2.12 **R3** - sets out standards for the provision of open space- in settlements of more than 1000 this is based on the standard of 2.43 ha(6 acres) per 1000 population.
- 2.13 The following policies in the Huntingdonshire Local plan Alteration are relevant:
- 2.14 **STR1** - outlines the settlement hierarchy
- 2.15 **STR3** - selects Huntingdon as a market town
- 2.16 **HL5** - indicates that good design and layout will be required for all new housing development
- 2.17 **HL6** - indicates that housing densities will be between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare
- 2.18 **AH1** defines affordable housing
- 2.19 **AH2** indicates that to achieve affordable housing the District Council will require developers to undertake that the rent or purchase price of such housing is below the lowest price at which a choice of properties can be found.
- 2.20 **AH3** - sets out the target for affordable housing
- 2.21 **OB1** - the nature and scale of obligations sought from development will be related to the size of the development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services
- 2.22 **OB2** - financial contributions may be sought for the maintenance of children's play space and recreational facilities woodland or landscaping.
- 2.23 The Oxmoor Action Plan is also relevant.
- 2.24 This plan has been adopted by the Council as Interim Policy Guidance. The Action Plan deals with the land use and spatial aspects of the wider programme to regenerate the area through the government's SRB programme and the government's Sustainable Communities Programme. The Plan identifies that new development supporting the community in Oxmoor is key to the generation of necessary funding to allow improvements to come forward. It highlights that a number of sites have the potential for residential development one of which is the application site.
- 2.25 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2002 is also relevant. This provides advice on how to ensure that development schemes embody the principles of good design.

3. **PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 None

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 **Huntingdon Town Council - NO OBJECTION (copy attached)**

4.2 **Local Highway Authority - NO OBJECTION**

4.3 **Head of Housing - NO OBJECTION** subject to appropriate provision for affordable housing

4.4 **Parks Manager-** No formal comments received

4.5 **Environment Agency - OBJECTION**

4.6 **Primary Care Trust** - effect on healthcare should be considered

4.7 **CC Chief Financial Planning Officer** - A contribution of £1,600 per dwelling is required.

4.8 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** - Adequate provision will need to be made for fire hydrants

4.9 **County Archaeologist** - recommend that site should be subject to programme or archaeological investigation.

4.10 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** - No comment at present time but would welcome opportunity to comment at reserved matter stage

5. **REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 **FIVE** letters of **OBJECTION** the concerns being -

- ◆ Loss of green open space
- ◆ Will result in antisocial behaviour - teenagers currently use the land to hang out on
- ◆ Increased traffic
- ◆ Strain on local schools
- ◆ 250 new houses will not enhance the area
- ◆ Oxmoor is already a large and overcrowded estate

5.2 In addition 12 residents completed the forms at the exhibition, which was held in April. As however these residents were commenting on this proposal and the proposal for Moorhouse Drive and other works in Oxmoor it is difficult to extract their views on this specific scheme, and the summaries set out below relate to both this scheme and the scheme at Moorhouse Drive. 7 residents indicated that they did not support the proposals, 2 residents indicated that they supported the proposals and 3 residents had no opinion either way.

5.3 The concerns of the residents who did not support the proposals are -

- ◆ Loss of public open space
- ◆ Additional traffic
- ◆ Traffic calming on bend of Moorhouse Drive a waste of money - required on other sections of the road
- ◆ Are walkways across green adjacent College to be kept open during building process
- ◆ Where will teenagers go who congregate at night
- ◆ Too many houses being built within Oxmoor - insufficient infrastructure to support it ie shops, hospitals, doctors, dentists
- ◆ Nothing is being provided for young people - need facilities like ice skating rink and larger swimming pool
- ◆ Few facilities for disabled people- need a purpose built centre for disabled people
- ◆ Moorhouse Drive is often boggy
- ◆ Concerned that play area at California Road will not be big enough for football
- ◆ Why are only houses(in California Road Scheme) to have visual impact- everyone deserves an attractive home
- ◆ Excessive density can result in social issues

5.4 The residents who support the scheme make the following comments -

- ◆ Excellent chance to improve a very scruffy area
- ◆ Good to see removal of church as it is dangerous
- ◆ More facilities needed however to accommodate extra people in area such as schooling, shops, leisure facilities and parks
- ◆ Very impressed with the Coneygear Park Plans
- ◆ Impressed with Local Authorities efforts to improve the environment

5.5 The residents who neither supported nor opposed the proposals make the following comments -

- ◆ Bridge at Sapley Square needs vandal proofing
- ◆ Older people need housing that will allow downsizing not just young people
- ◆ Children need places to play football
- ◆ Issue of child safety needs to be considered
- ◆ Concerned that exhibition clashed with another event. Queried whether options had been widely advertised.
- ◆ Will disability and elderly problems be dealt with

5.6 The Huntingdon Civic Society makes the following observations -

- ◆ Accept that it is featureless playing field which is underused by residents
- ◆ High density housing will be at odds with low density housing on opposite side of Oxmoor Lane
- ◆ Concerned that existing planting will be lost - all new planting should be native species

6. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 6.1 The issues which need to be considered relate to whether the proposed loss of the open space is acceptable; whether the principle of providing additional housing is acceptable; whether the Design Statement is sufficiently detailed; the effect on residential amenity; the effect on highway safety; drainage and the benefit of the scheme to the regeneration of the area.

Loss of open space

- 6.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 stresses that there is a need to consider both the quantity and quality of the open space provision. It recommends that audits should be carried out for open space.
- 6.3 An audit has been carried out for Huntingdon in order to determine the quality of open space. This included an analysis of the two types of open space - formal recreational and informal open space. This found that there were a total of 47.22 hectares of formal recreational space and 113.04 hectares of informal open space within Huntingdon. Overall, it was concluded that Huntingdon had a surplus of 16.79 hectares of formal recreational open space.
- 6.4 Oxmoor is also well supported in terms of existing formal pitch provision with both Sapley Park and King George V playing fields within easy reach. The Jubilee Fields at Kings Ripton Road require car borne access but Oxmoor is the nearest part of Huntingdon to these facilities.
- 6.5 California Road is one of four sites identified in the Oxmoor Action Plan for housing development (although the Action Plan did not include all of the college land). The development of the four sites identified in the Action Plan would reduce the level of informal open space in Huntingdon to 105.05 hectares. Even allowing for the development of these sites Oxmoor would still have more informal open space provision per residents than other more modern developments in Huntingdon. There are 4.12 ha of informal open space per thousand people in Oxmoor. In Stukeley Meadows the ratio is 4.01 Ha per thousand population in Hinchingsbrooke 2.43 Ha per thousand population and in Sapley Road 1.33 Ha per thousand population.
- 6.6 Open space is integral to the layout of Oxmoor. All houses are within 100 metres or 1 minute walk of open spaces associated with housing. The Oxmoor Action Plan concluded that these small pockets of open space are close and safer to access than some of the larger more remote areas. California Road, whilst being a large piece of land is not a particularly valuable area, being solely an area of grass without any play facilities. The Action Plan identifies open spaces where the investment of resources gained from the loss of other open spaces will be directly used to fund quality improvements including the establishment of a new park at Coneygear Road.

- 6.7 A comprehensive programme of open space/greenspace improvements are being put in place to enhance the quality and usability of open space areas in Oxmoor.
- 6.8 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 indicates that proposals to develop areas of space should be supported by the local community. In preparing the Oxmoor Action Plan consultation with the local community was carried out and residents agreed that:
- There was a large amount of open space on the estate
 - It was mostly of a uniform kind managed in the same way
 - There were different sorts of spaces that could be treated in distinctly different ways
- 6.9 Objections to this application on the basis of the loss of the open space have been received from nearby residents, however having regard to the policy basis and rationale set out above these do not justify refusal of the scheme.

Suitability for housing

- 6.10 The site is located within the built up area of Huntingdon and therefore the principle of developing the site for housing is acceptable. Policy HL5 in the Alteration to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan requires the best use to be made of land and policies P5/3 in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and Policy HL6 in the Alteration to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan require that the density of development be at least 30 dwellings per hectare and more for sites well served by public transport. The development brief indicates that the site should be developed at an average density of approximately 37 dwellings per hectare and would thus accommodate around 195 dwellings.

Planning and Design Statement

- 6.11 The Planning and Design Statement is not as comprehensive as the development brief which has been submitted in respect of the Moorhouse Drive development. A condition will therefore be imposed requiring the submission of a more detailed development brief prior to the submission of a reserved matter application.

Effect on residential amenity

- 6.12 As this is an outline application no details of the proposed dwellings are available. It should however be possible to develop the site without being harmful to residential amenity.

Highway safety

- 6.13 Residents have expressed concern that the additional housing will increase parking problems in Oxmoor. This will be a matter to be considered at reserved matter stage and care will need to be taken to ensure that the right parking standards are applied. The Highway

Authority has advised that traffic calming in California Road is considered to be unnecessary.

Drainage

- 6.14 The Environment Agency has objected to the proposal because it does not include details of drainage. On sites of over 5 Hectares they require applications to be accompanied by a drainage strategy. The applicant is currently investigating the appropriate drainage measures for the site and a grampian condition could be imposed to ensure that this matter is satisfactorily addressed prior to the submission of a reserved matter application.

Interim Planning Policy - Oxmoor Action Plan

- 6.15 The development of this site is an integral part of wider planning policies related to environmental improvements and the development of a new District Centre to serve the Oxmoor area. Both the development of this site and the new District Centre at Sapley Square are part of the government's Sustainable Communities Programme and implementation is interrelated. In considering this proposal the environmental, economic and social objectives being promoted for Oxmoor should be accorded weight although technically the proposal will need to be referred to Full Council and the Government Office as a departure from the Local Plan should the Panel be minded to support this proposal. The Interim Planning Guidance whilst not part of the Development Plan is a material consideration which should be afforded weight in the decision making process especially as it has emerged from extensive consultation and involvement with the community and parties including the Primary Care Trust, County Council, Town Council and resident groups.
- 6.16 As part of the Oxmoor Action Plan measures are being put in place to improve the existing infrastructure. A new medical centre is under construction, which will not just include a doctor's surgery but also other related health care provision. Sapley Square is being redeveloped. Environmental improvements are being carried out and Conegear Park is to be improved. It would be inappropriate to provide facilities such as an ice rink or large swimming pool in Oxmoor. Central government advice is that the first choice for such facilities should be in town centres.

Youth, elderly and disabled issues

- 6.17 The concerns which have been expressed about the need for provision for teenagers, the elderly and disabled are noted however they do not relate specifically to the consideration of this application.

Planning obligations

- 6.18 The proposal is of a size, which would generate the need for contributions to -
- ◆ Affordable housing

- ◆ Open space
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Market town strategy

6.19 The Parks Manager has informally advised that the following committed sums would normally be required for a site of this size:

1. **Children's play equipment**

One leap/heap

Capital costs £60,000

Maintenance Costs £18,000

Two laps

Capital costs £24,000

Maintenance Costs £10,000

2. **Children's and youth/adult open space**

Children's open space

Capital costs £5,320

Maintenance costs £13,680

Youth/adult open space

Capital cost £10,640

Maintenance costs £27,360

6.20 Public open space and a children's play area to meet the requirements of Policy R7 in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 for children's playspace are to be provided on site. The improvements to Conegear Park meet the youth/adult requirement.

6.21 The Highway Authority has requested the usual contribution towards the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy. A number of environmental improvements have however been carried out and are planned and in this case, having regard to the regeneration needs of Oxmoor, it is considered that it would be more appropriate to concentrate expenditure in Oxmoor. An offsite footpath is to be provided to Coxons Close.

6.22 The County have requested a contribution towards education of £1600.

6.23 29% of the units are to be for affordable housing.

6.24 In conclusion, whilst the proposal is technically contrary to the Local Plan there are very strong material considerations, which include the surplus of open space in Oxmoor, and the regeneration benefits to Oxmoor which support this proposal. It is therefore recommended that the application be forwarded to Full Council and the Government

Office as a departure from the development plan with a recommendation that permission be granted subject, to the receipt of an amended Design Statement and subject to an agreement in respect of contributions towards education, public open space, offsite footpath/cycleway provision and affordable housing and subject to conditions to include the following.

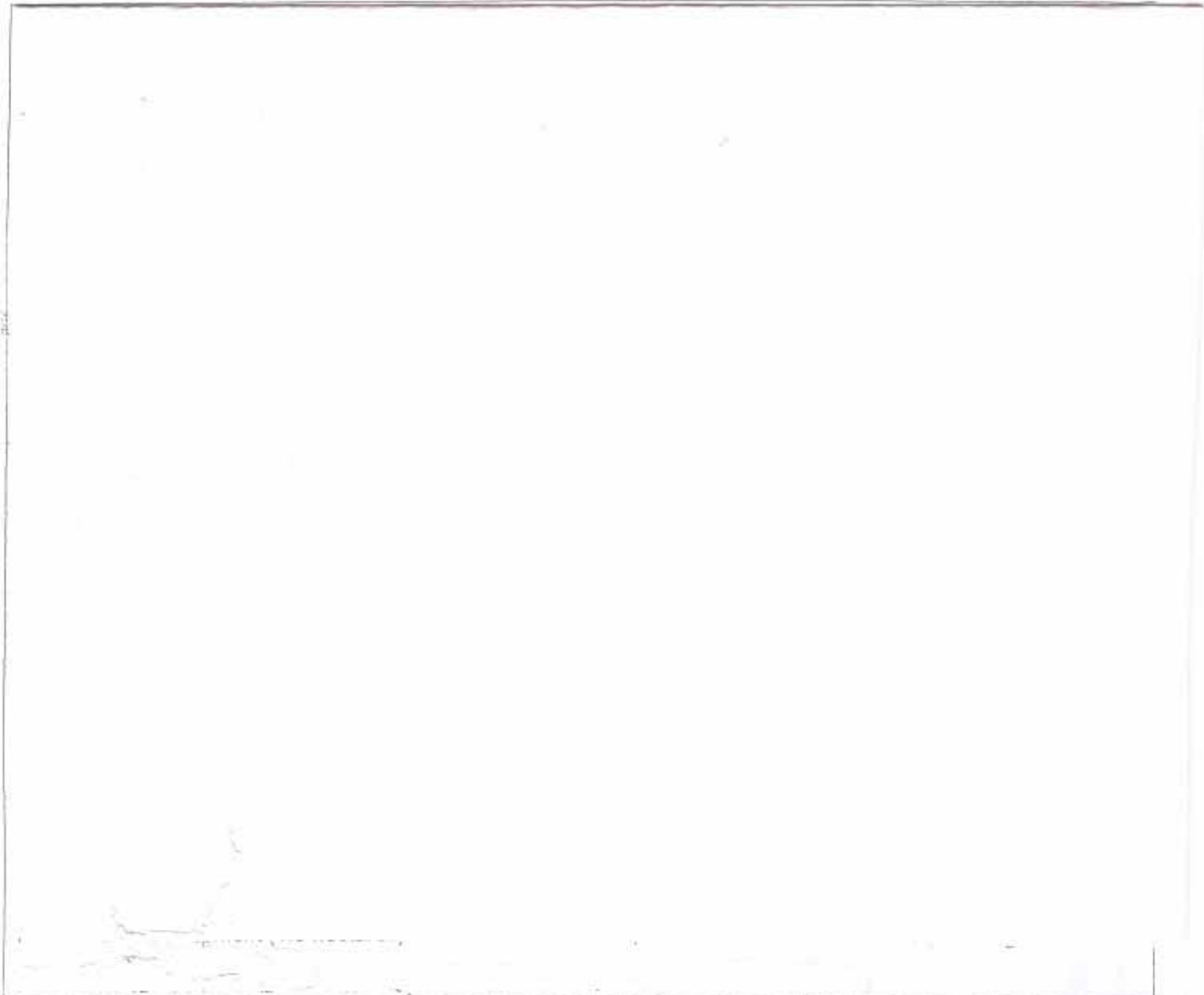
7. RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE, subject to conditions to include the following:

- 01001 -** Details reserved
- 01003 -** Reserved matters within three years
- 01004 -** Special circumstances
- Nonstand -** Grampian re drainage
- Nonstand -** Archaeology
- Nonstand -** Tree protection
- Nonstand -** Fire hydrants
- Nonstand -** Planning brief
- Nonstand -** Levels
- Nonstand -** Highway details and construction

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File Reference: 0500836OUT
Huntingdonshire Local Plan
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan

Contact Officer: Sue Wheatley, Development Control Team Leader
☎ 01480 388490



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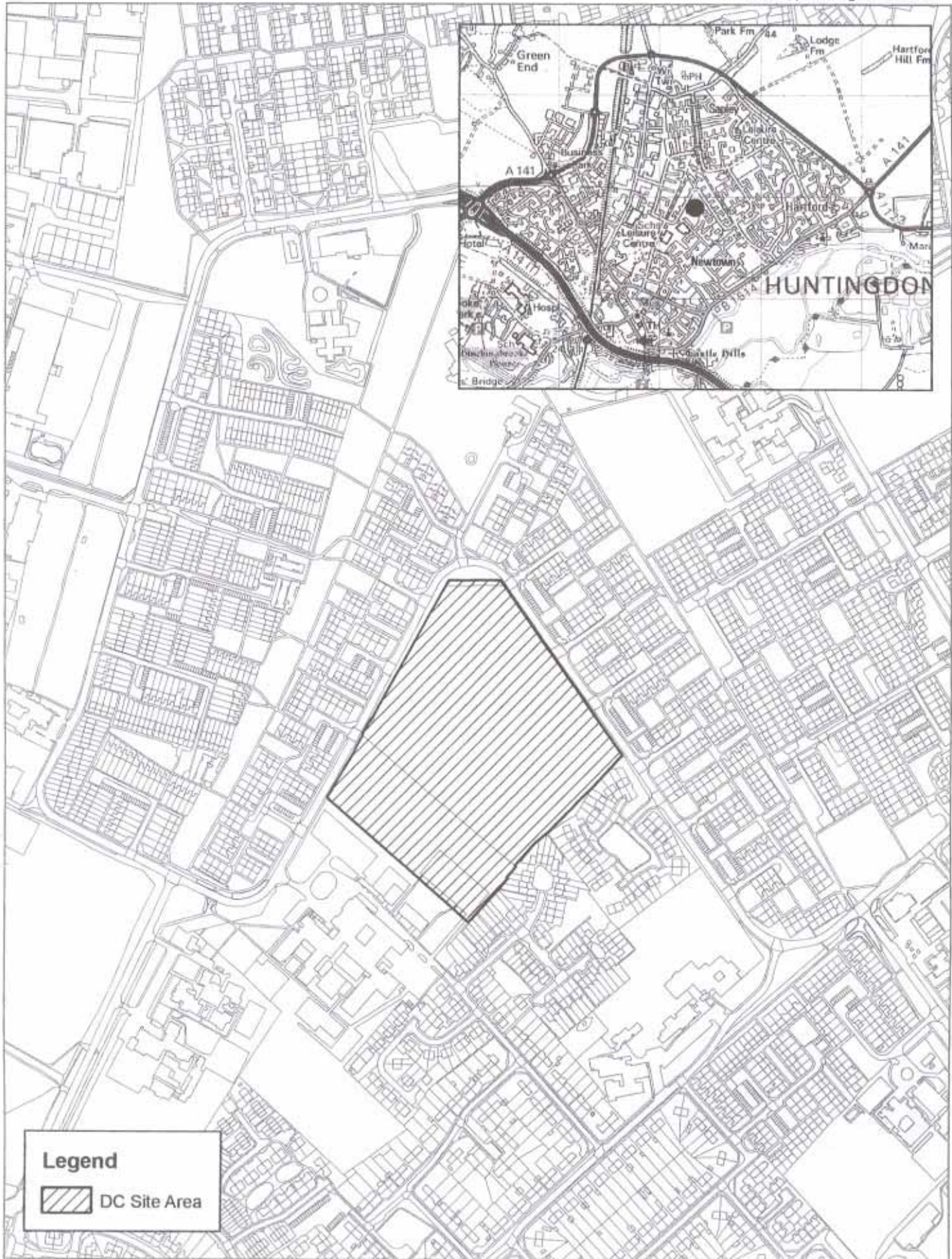
0500836OUT

WEST 2


Cambridgeshire County Council & Huntingdonshire
Regional College, c/o Agent: John Martin & Associates
Farm Hall Offices, West Street, Godmanchester PE29
2HG

Residential development (5.4 hectares) Land North East of Huntingdonshire Regional College California Road,
Huntingdon

Recommend APPROVAL. The development meets an existing local housing need.




Legend

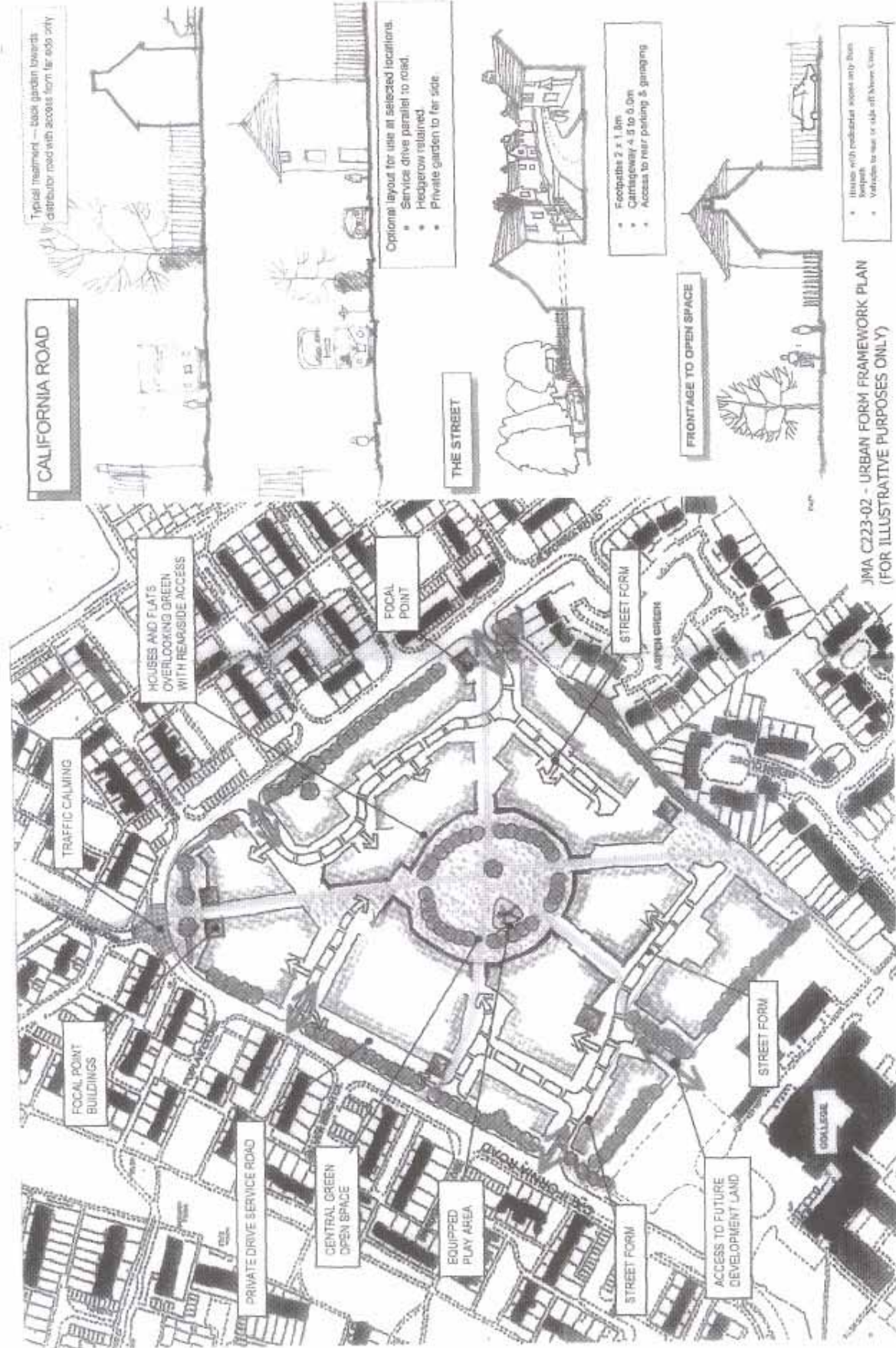
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Scale: 1:5000

 **Huntingdonshire**
HISTORIC COUNCIL

Parish: Huntingdon PE29 1BJ



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Employment Panel

Report of the meeting held on 8th June 2005

Matters for Information

1. STAFF TRAVEL PLAN

The Panel has considered the content of the District Council's draft Travel Plan for 2005-2010, together with details of the issues raised during consultation with Council staff. The Plan is designed to set out a package of measures and initiatives to reduce the adverse impact of private car usage and to provide as wide a choice as possible for employees and Councillors in terms of alternative travel modes.

In considering the draft Plan, the Panel has noted that an Action Plan is currently being prepared, which will include a review of the existing car parking arrangements at Pathfinder House and Castle Hill House.

2. REQUESTS TO FILL VACANT POSTS

Having considered the circumstances applicable to vacancies in each of the three Council Directorates for a -

- ◆ Web Team Manager;
- ◆ Web Developer;
- ◆ Personnel and Development Manager;
- ◆ Training and Development Advisor; and
- ◆ Environmental Health Officer

- the Panel has authorised the Head of Personnel Services to commence recruitment in each case.

3. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION – STAFFING

Having considered proposed changes to staffing in the Information Management Division, the Panel has agreed to establish a post of Systems Support Officer in the light of the likely cost implications and future requirements of the Division.

As part of the new arrangements, the Panel also has approved the deletion of the post of ICT Services Manager and, subject to Cabinet identifying the necessary funding, approved the award of a redundancy package to the employee concerned.

**4. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION –
PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

In light of the proposed procurement and development of a new District Council headquarters and other accommodation, the Panel has considered proposals to establish a post of Project Director. Having considered the potential cost implications for the District Council in seeking to transfer an existing post holder for this purpose, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that, subject to her prior resignation as an employee, consideration be given to the retention of Mrs E Wilson in a consultancy capacity in connection with the project.

In acknowledgement of the specialist nature of this work and on the grounds that the engagement of Mrs Wilson in a consultancy capacity would represent the Council's best interests, the Panel has invited the Cabinet to approve the adoption of the single tender option as set out in paragraph 5.3E of the Code of Procurement. The Panel also has recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, and its Chairman to approve terms for the retention of Mrs Wilson's services.

In the event of Mrs Wilson resigning from the post of Director of Operational Services, the Panel has agreed that the vacancy be advertised and an appointment made.

J W Davies
Chairman

LICENSING AND PROTECTION PANEL

Report of the meeting held on 21st June 2005

Matters for Information

1. SERVICE PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

The Panel has considered the executive summary of the draft Service Plan for Health and Safety Enforcement for 2005/6. The Plan has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health and Safety Commission and contains sections on the aims and objectives of the service and the resources available, together with a review of the work undertaken in the previous year.

The Panel has authorised the Director of Operational Services to approve the final content of the 2005/06 Service Plan for Health and Safety following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

2. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005/06

The Panel has considered an executive summary of the proposed Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement for 2005/06. The Plan has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and incorporates the aims and objectives of the service and the resources available, together with a review of the work undertaken during the previous year.

Members have been informed that the format of the Service Plan remains similar to that of the previous Plan, and that a new consolidated FSA Code of Practice has been included to pilot an alternative enforcement strategy to revise the frequency of inspections of smaller premises in the District.

A separate report on the subject appears on the agenda for the Council to consider. The Panel has therefore endorsed the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement for consideration by the Council.

3. AIR QUALITY REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT – DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF NITROGEN DIOXIDE

The Panel has been advised of the actions taken by the District Council to review and assess local air quality as required by the Environment Act 1995, together with the outcome of a detailed assessment into nitrogen dioxide in Huntingdonshire.

Members have been reminded that the previous annual progress report of air quality in the previous year had indicated that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were close to the annual mean objective at a number of locations in Huntingdon and St Neots. The findings necessitated more detailed assessments of nitrogen dioxide which have confirmed that the annual mean objective is unlikely to be met in Huntingdon close to the A14 trunk road, the inner ring road and Stukeley Road/St Peter's Road and in a small central area in St Neots. Members have been advised that the assessment has also identified additional locations near the A1 and A14 with high levels of nitrogen dioxide that are the subject of further detailed work which is scheduled for completion by the end of July.

As a result, the Panel has noted that Air Quality Management Areas will have to be declared for the affected areas by the end of November 2005 and action plans made by April 2007 containing proposals to remediate the situation. Where necessary, this will involve partnership working with external agencies such as the Highways Agency.

Having been informed that the next review and assessment will take place in April 2006, the Panel has authorised the Head of Environmental Health Services to publish the findings of the detailed assessment report and to proceed to declare Air Quality Management Areas as required.

4. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003: IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS RELATED TO HIGH HEDGES

The Panel has been acquainted with the implementation of recent legislation in relation to high hedges which has come into force on 1st June 2005.

The Panel has been advised that initial indications suggested that a significant number of people may seek action under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, but that as yet Government funding is unlikely to be forthcoming and expenditure by the Council will have to be recovered from the fees that are recovered.

In view of the limited resources available and the fact that the legislation requires the procedure to be used by the public as a last resort, the Panel has agreed that a fee of £450 be set in respect of complaints, under the Act and that a full refund of fees be made if a Tree Preservation Order is placed on a tree or trees within a hedge which is subject to a complaint under the Act. Members have also authorised Officers to carry out various functions under the Act.

5. PAVEMENT CAFES

The Panel has considered amendments to the conditions pertaining to consents for pavement cafes issued by the Council. Members have been informed that the existing conditions permit the consumption of alcohol unrelated to the consumption of food outside premises until 11pm but having regard to the potential implications for

public nuisance, the Panel has agreed to amend the conditions so as to permit the consumption of alcohol only as an ancillary to the consumption of food and to limit the operating hours from 09.00 hours to 21.00 hours.

6. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

The Panel has appointed a number of representatives to outside organisations for the ensuing Municipal Year.

J M Sadler
Chairman

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LICENSING COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on 21st June 2005

Matters for Information

1. APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES

The Committee has been reminded that under the Licensing Act 2003, nine Sub Committees had been appointed to which the discharge of certain responsibilities had been delegated. In view of the appointment of Councillor A Hansard as Executive Councillor for Policy and Resources, the Committee has re-appointed Members to the Sub Committees.

2. FEES

The Committee has considered a number of issues with regard to exemptions from fees and the determination of fee levels where premises are to be used exclusively or primarily for the consumption of alcohol.

The Committee has been reminded that under existing legislation, the Council has discretion to remit the whole or part of a fee for public entertainment, where the entertainment was of a charitable purpose and a fee was not usually charged for a licence in such circumstances. Members have been reminded that under the Licensing Act 2003, the exemption from fees does not apply to charitable events and that should the Committee wish to offer a discount, the loss of income would have to be met by the Council's general revenue budget. The Committee also has noted the Cabinet adopted a policy in November 2004 which required that all relevant legislation be complied with in the setting of fees and charges and that charges should be fixed to maximise income, net of applicable costs. Therefore the Committee has agreed to not remit fees for events held for charitable or other like purposes under the Licensing Act 2003.

On a related subject, the Committee has been reminded that an amendment to the Fees Regulations under the Licensing Act 2003 has enabled additional revenue to be generated to address problems arising from large establishments used primarily and exclusively for consumption of alcohol on the premise, where fees for premises in rateable values D and E can be doubled and tripled respectively. In the event of a potential challenge to the use of the multiplier and in the absence of definition of 'primarily' or 'exclusively', the Committee has authorised the Head of Administration (or in his absence the Central Services Manager), after consultation with the Chairman or

Vice-Chairman of the Committee to increase the level of fees for premises in Bands D and E in accordance with the Fees Regulations.

3. LICENSING ACT 2003: THE LICENSING REGISTER

The Committee has been acquainted with the requirement under the Licensing Act 2003 for a register to be kept by the Licensing Authority of certain information prescribed in the Act and Regulations. The Committee has noted that an electronic version of the register is being developed which can be made available, where appropriate, on the website. Where a paper copy is required, the Committee have agreed that a fee of 50 pence per A4 copy be charged.

4. MEMBERS' LICENSING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Committee has approved a draft of a Proposed Members' Code of Good Practice for Licensing. The recent additional licensing responsibilities placed on the Committee by the Licensing Act 2003 has highlighted a need for good practice to be adopted for all licensing functions and actions by Members and the Code of Good Practice for Licensing has been drawn up with regard to guidance issued by LACORS and the Code of Good Practice for Planning already adopted by the Council.

The Committee has recommended the Licensing Code to the Corporate Governance Panel initially for endorsement.

J M Sadler
Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny (Planning and Finance)

Report of the meetings held on 12th April and 14th June 2005 and a Joint Meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources) held on 7th June 2005

Matters for Determination

1. **PROPOSED UPGRADE OF A14 ELLINGTON TO FEN DITTON – HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION**

The Panel has been acquainted with the current proposals that are the subject of consultation by the Highways Agency to improve the A14 between Ellington & Fen Ditton, together with the Council's proposed response to the consultation which has been endorsed by the Cabinet.

The Panel acknowledged that the precise details of the proposals would be a matter for discussion on an ongoing basis once the preferred route had been confirmed. However the Panel was conscious of the potential impact of the changes upon the community of Brampton and Members expressed their support for measures that would minimise the implications for local residents.

The Panel also recognised the need to adopt a pragmatic approach to the proposals put forward by the Highways Agency. Although disappointment was expressed at the failure to construct the new road to motorway standard, Members accepted that little would be achieved in pressing for additional investment by the Government and that this may further delay the implementation of the scheme.

Having been advised that a Project Team had been established to investigate the future of the existing A14 viaduct over the railway line in Huntingdon and the possible establishment of a replacement junction on Brampton Road, the Panel has requested sight of the design after the proposals became further advanced.

The Panel therefore

RECOMMEND

that the recommendations agreed by the Cabinet on the A14 upgrade be supported and that sympathetic

consideration be given to proposals to the west of Brampton that will minimise the impact on that community.

Matters for Information

2. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING REVIEW

Following their study on the subject in 2002, the Panel has been updated on the current situation with respect to street naming and numbering in the District.

Having been informed that an assessment of existing street name plates and service standards was being undertaken as part of an exercise to digitise the Council's records, Members of the Panel have expressed their concern that inadequate street naming and numbering poses problems for the emergency services, represents a potential road hazard for visitors/ tradesmen and presents a poor impression of the area. Particular reference was made to the problems experienced on Oxmoor and in villages where houses are not numbered.

Having regard to Members' concerns in relation to the importance of ensuring that roads are adequately named and the importance of obtaining local opinion, the Panel has asked the Head of Environment & Transport to write to all town and parish councils informing them of the Council's exercise and inviting them to identify any current gaps in provision.

A further report will be submitted to the Panel's September meeting with the results of the survey, and details of further responses from Parish Councils.

3. MONITORING S106 AGREEMENTS: PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

As part of their ongoing scrutiny of the expenditure of money obtained through Agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Panel has considered the first quarterly monitoring report prepared by the Policy Division.

The Panel will continue to monitor the situation on a quarterly basis.

4. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION

The Panel has been acquainted with the deliberations of the Cabinet at their meeting on 17th March 2005 in respect of Office Accommodation.

In so doing, the Panel has been pleased to note that the Cabinet has authorised further work on the availability of edge of town centre land in Huntingdon and to invite expressions of interest from developers to

provide potential sites and design and construct alternative accommodation.

Subsequent to that report, at a joint meeting of the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels, Members have been updated on a range of matters relating to the procurement process and the output specification for the Council's new accommodation. During discussion the following were noted and/or agreed in conjunction with the Leader of the Council -

- ◆ decisions on the acceptance of tenderers at Stages I and II of the tender evaluation process will be made by the full Council at meetings in September and December 2005 respectively;
- ◆ despite acceptance by the Panels that expert advice is required on a range of matters during the procurement and construction processes, concern was expressed at the potential cost of consultancy work with an assurance being given that this would be subject to a competitive tendering exercise;
- ◆ in response to a request for greater involvement on the part of Members in the choice of the successful scheme, it was agreed that both Panels would be consulted at a joint meeting on Stages I and II of the tender evaluation process prior to final decisions being taken by the Council;
- ◆ in response to a comment regarding the absence of any reference in the Employers' Requirements to a potential expansion of accommodation requirements in future years, the Panels were informed that the specification provided for greater space availability than in the current premises and that significant expansion was likely to result only from local government reorganisation, in which case other buildings would become available for the new authority. Other initiatives also were being progressed including hot-desking and home-working which would reduce overall space requirements;
- ◆ the overall criteria and their respective priorities for the assessment of tenders had yet to be determined, although this would provide the Council with the opportunity to provide services at the best value;
- ◆ it was not intended to undertake a public consultation exercise owing to the complexity of the project, although the development had been the subject of considerable media interest;
- ◆ the Council was able to fund the new development from existing resources but the implications of the development and the potential for Council Tax capping in the current year would result in the MTP being reviewed if necessary;
- ◆ the new building would have a high BREEAM rating, which would result in lower future operating costs for the Council;
- ◆ tenderers would be required to meet two fundamental requirements by specifying a gross maximum price for the new accommodation and a gross minimum price for the disposal of the Council's existing accommodation site. Once a tender had been accepted and following subsequent negotiation any

- variations from the prices specified would be shared between the Council and the company; and
- ◆ support was expressed by the Panels for the development approach now adopted, in particular the market testing element to ensure that all options were explored.

The Panels have decided to hold a further joint meeting on 13th September to consider the outcome of Stage I of the evaluation process.

5. GROWING SUCCESS: A CORPORATE PLAN

The Panel has reviewed the Council's Corporate Plan, together with the results of an annual survey of a representative sample of Huntingdonshire residents. Details of performance information collected for the Council's balanced scorecard and the National Best Value Performance Indicators also have been supplied and will continue to be reported to both Panels on a quarterly basis.

6. TRAVEL PLAN

Further to item No. 54 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 13th April 2005, the Panel has considered the latest draft of the proposed Travel Plan, together with the outcome of the consultation to date with employees.

The Panel is of the opinion that more extensive consultation should take place with staff and that this should be extended to include Members who will also be affected by the proposals. The Panel has also commented on the importance of providing incentives in the Plan to encourage employees and Councillors to change their reliance on the motor car and adopt alternative forms of transportation.

7. DISCOUNTS TO CUSTOMERS

The Panel has considered current practice regarding the provision of discounts to customers for the use of Council services and has noted that this is primarily left to the discretion of service managers under the Council's existing policy on fees and charges. Currently those discounts which are offered are primarily age related but the Panel is of the opinion that discounts should be extended to those in receipt of benefits.

The Panel has also queried the level of usage of the Council's leisure centres by residents living in neighbouring authority areas. Having regard to the net cost to the Council in operating the Centres, the Panel has questioned whether non-Huntingdonshire residents should be subject to a higher charge for using Centre facilities. As a result the Panel has asked the Director of Commerce & Technology to investigate the feasibility of introducing a discount scheme for leisure centre usage for residents of Huntingdonshire and report back to a future meeting. The Panel has also recommended the Cabinet to consider authorising service managers to use their discretion under

the existing policy to offer discounts for Council services to benefit recipients.

8. PFI PARTNERING AGREEMENT

The Panel has noted the content of the draft Partnering Agreement for the Private Finance Initiative with the County Council for future waste disposal arrangements within Cambridgeshire.

Having noted that the agreement builds upon the Statement of Understanding previously signed by the District Council and that the Council can withdraw from the agreement by giving 3 months notice, the Panel has no objection to the agreement as drafted.

9. HUNTINGDONSHIRE FLOOD FORUM

The Panel has appointed Councillor P A Swales (or his nominee) as their representative on the Huntingdonshire Flood Forum.

10. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At the invitation of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources), the Panel has nominated Councillor P G Mitchell as the substitute representative to attend meetings of the Cambridgeshire Health & Social Care Committee.

11. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel has reviewed its workplan on studies. In so doing the Panel has decided to scrutinise the ongoing formulation of the Local Development Framework and invited the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery & Resources) to consider the present policy on the kerbside sorting of recyclable materials.

Following the recent publication of the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report, the Panel has decided to invite Town & Parish Councils to suggest potential subjects for study.

12. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Forward Plan of key decisions which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council. Arising from the Panel's concerns regarding the Highways Agency consultation on the new A14, an urgent item of business was considered at the Council meeting on 13th April 2005, to enable the Council to make representations to the Highways Agency over the cancellation of exhibitions at short notice prior to the recent General Election.

P A Swales
Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny (Service Delivery and Resources)

Report of the meetings held on 5th April and
7th June 2005

Matters for Information

1. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTERIM PLAN

The Panel has endorsed for submission to the Cabinet the Children and Young People's Interim Plan for 2005/06. In so doing Members have been acquainted with the arrangements that have been put in place to meet new statutory requirements relating to services for children and young people.

Members have discussed the division of services by age and the practical implications of the Interim Plan, following which Members have expressed the view that the Council should be formally represented at senior level on a proposed Huntingdonshire Area Group. Members also have requested that, once formulated, detailed plans and key service delivery points are submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

2. LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

The Panel has received details of the second Local Public Service Agreement in Cambridgeshire, including background information to the Agreement, an outline of the role of the District Council, the allocation of funding involved and the priorities contained in the Agreement.

The Panel has been assured that the Agreement does not commit the Council to any funding for services in excess of that already included in the Medium Term Plan.

The Panel has discussed affordable housing; older people and home improvement grant aid and has requested that monitoring data collected by the County Council under the Agreement is submitted to the Panel on a quarterly basis as part of their regular performance monitoring report.

**3. MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS:
REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

The Panel has endorsed a revised Communications and Consultation Strategy for the Council. In considering the changes, Members' attention has been drawn to the criteria against which the Strategy will be assessed and the action plan.

The Panel has received confirmation that the Audit Commission is satisfied that all relevant matters raised during the Comprehensive Performance Assessment have been addressed in the Strategy, that it will be reviewed again in three years and that the Panel will be provided with details of the Council's performance against the Strategy.

At the suggestion of the Vice-Chairman, references will be included in the Strategy to the Council's communication with the Local Government Association and to the provision of seminars for Members on technical matters.

4. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION

The Panel has received details of the decisions by the Cabinet following consideration of the feasibility study by Lambert Smith Hampton into options for the Council's future headquarters and depot accommodation, the comments of the District Council Headquarters and Other Office Accommodation Members Advisory Group and of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

5. HEAR BY RIGHT

Further to Item No. 41 of the Report to the meeting of the Council held on 13th April 2005, the Panel has received the revised Action Plan for Working towards Emerging Status in implementing Hear by Right. Hear by Right is a set of standards developed by the National Youth Agency and the Local Government Association to help develop procedures to involve young people in local decision-making. The Action Plan has been amended to include reference to priorities and timescales as requested by the Panel.

The Panel has discussed the Council's duties under the Children's Act and the ways in which they might become involved in implementing the Action Plan. As a result Councillors D A Giles and J S Watt have been nominated to monitor appropriate projects from the Hear by Right Action Plan within the south and north of the District respectively and to report back to the Panel on progress.

6. GROWING SUCCESS: A CORPORATE PLAN

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) the Panel has reviewed Growing Success: A Corporate Plan. Members' attention has been drawn to the framework within which the Plan operates and the priorities that have been developed

in response to a suggestion by the Audit Commission. In discussing the priorities Members have noted the way in which they have been arrived at and the uses to which they will be put.

Having been assured that, given the Council's current position, the Plan is intended to order the Council's priorities and will not be used to reduce services, the Panel has discussed the priorities according to healthy population, specifically the inspection and enforcement at food premises, safe and active communities and market housing. However, the Panel has concluded that baseline data should be established via the Performance Management Framework before the prioritisation can be properly evaluated. The Panel has therefore requested the Cabinet to consider the inclusion of reference to market housing under the priority Housing which meets Local Needs as having High Impact.

The Panel also has considered the Corporate Scorecard. Specific reference has been made to public satisfaction with the level of Council Tax for the services provided by the Council and the measures planned to improve satisfaction in the District. Members also have discussed the targets for accessible services and the general approach to target setting.

With regard to the Council's performance against National Best Value Performance Indicators for 2004/05, a number of queries relating to the Council's performance have been raised and further information has been requested on -

- ◆ the percentage of land and highways assessed as having significant or heavy combined deposits of litter and detritus;
- ◆ the average length of stay in bed & breakfast and hostels;
- ◆ the number of benefit claimants visited per 1,000 cases; and
- ◆ the percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year.

Finally, the Panel has been acquainted with the work undertaken by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Working Group on the Improvement Plan, the outcome of which will be reported to the next meeting.

7. THE RURAL ECONOMY AND SERVICES

Further to Item No 1(a) of the Report to the meeting of the Council held on 21st July 2004, it was reported at the meeting in May that the Countryside Agency had declined a request to speak to the Panel on the rural economy and services and, as a result, Members have reviewed the objectives of the study. Various options were considered, following which a report was requested on the District Council's role on promoting and assisting the village economy, practices at other authorities in this area, problems being experienced in rural villages, the findings of the Countryside Agency Study on rural economies in the East of England and village regeneration together with a revised study plan.

At the meeting of the Panel in June Members received a report summarising the findings of the report of the Countryside Agency entitled Rural Economies – Stepping Stones: A Regional Perspective of the East of England and containing a number of suggestions for areas that might be pursued as part of the study on the rural economy and services. Having discussed the role of larger settlements, Members have requested details of the Council's policies and plans relating to the local economy and the provision of Council services to rural areas via towns and larger settlements. On receipt of this information a sub group will be established and tasked with liaising with villages to assess the degree to which these policies and plans are being implemented.

Other Matters of Interest

8. ACQUISITION OF LAND AT HOUGHTON ROAD, ST IVES

The Chairman has reported that, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, he had given consent for the acquisition of land at St Ives for affordable housing to be submitted as an item of urgency to the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 24th February 2005.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Forward Plan and forthcoming Key Decisions which has been prepared by the Leader of the Council.

10. PROGRESS

The Panel has been apprised of the progress of actions required as a result of its previous decisions and has received updates on the Council's policy on smoking in leisure centres, the work of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Working Group and the study on older persons public health needs. With regard to the latter Councillor K J Churchill has been appointed to the Working Group tasked with undertaking this study in replacement of Councillor A Hansard.

11. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest. A number of queries raised with regard to items appearing in the Digest have been answered to Members' satisfaction.

K Reynolds
Chairman